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CONTENTS

NOTICE TO READERS: An * indicates material not disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Sudan's Abu-Salih Views IGADD Initiative *[Omdurman Radio]* 1

Inter-Arab Affairs

Syria's al-'Allaf Meets Arab League Chief *[Cairo Radio]* 1

Palestinian Affairs

Hamas Said To Reject Israeli Cease-Fire Proposal *[AL-QUDS 14 Dec]* 1
Fatah Hawks Threaten Revenge on 18 Israelis *[AL-DUSTUR 15 Dec]* 2
Habash on Struggle, 'Arafat, Islamic Revival *[AL-SAFIR 7 Dec]* 2
PFLP Holds 1st Public Convention in Gaza *[HA'ARETZ 13 Dec]* 4
Deportee Spokesman Views PLO Leadership, Plans *[AL-SAFIR 11 Dec]* 5
Palestinian Deportees To Return Home 15 Dec 6
Deportees Receive Notification *[VOL]* 6
Deportees Leave Marj al-Zuhur Camp *[VOM]* 7
Israelis Prepare for Deportees Return *[RFL]* 7
Official Denounces Israeli Actions, Accord *[Baghdad Radio]* 7
'Intense Dismay' Noted at Delay in Implementation *[AL-NAHAR 13 Dec]* 7
Israeli Stances Blamed for Implementation Failure *[AL-QUDS 13 Dec]* 7
Rabin Seen as 'Loser' After Withdrawal Delay *[London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI 14 Dec]* 8

OPEC Affairs

Measures Needed To Stop Drops in Oil Prices *[Tehran Radio]* 9

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

Twelve Croats, Bosnians Killed Near Blida *[AFP]* 10
Murders Confirmed *[Algiers TV]* 10
Interior Minister on Safety of Foreigners *[Algiers Radio]* 10
Chief Councillor Killed; 21 'Terrorists' Held *[Algiers TV]* 10
FIS Leader Starts Hunger Strike; Regime Warned *[IRNA]* 10

Egypt

Musa Meets With U.S. Senate Delegation *[Cairo Radio]* 10
Columnist on U.S. Claims on Israel's Nuclear Arms *[AL-AHRAM 9 Dec]* 11
Sidqi Delivers Government Policy Statement *[Cairo Radio]* 11
Al-Alfi on 'Scheme' To Penetrate State Agencies *[MENA]* 20
Bosnia's Ganic Meets Arab League Chief *[MENA]* 20
Bosnian Vice President Departs *[MENA]* 21

Morocco

Ministry Denies Plan for Ties With Israel *[MAP]* 21

Sudan

Former Army Chief Views Alleged Coup Trial *[London International]* 21
Al-Bashir on Countering 'Forces of Arrogance' *[Omdurman Radio]* 22
Al-Bashir on 'Foreign Interference' *[Omdurman Radio]* 22
Al-Bashir Addresses, Praises Security Forces *[Omdurman Radio]* 22
TNA Head Denies Southern Conflict Religious *[Omdurman Radio]* 22

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Kuwait

Minister Confirms Digging of Trench Continues *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 13 Dec]* 23

Qatar

Mirage-2000, Leclerc Sale to Qatar Reported Near *[London AL-HAYAH 7 Dec]* 23

Yemen

Vice President Said Planning Return To Sanaa *[INA]* 23
Basindwah Denies Salih, al-Bid To Meet in Jordan
[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 14 Dec] 23

IRAQ

Former German Minister of State Meets Leaders 25
Tariq 'Aziz Receives Wischeunsky *[Baghdad Radio]* 25
Saddam Orders Release of Prisoner *[Baghdad Radio]* 25
Health Minister Meets French Parliamentarians *[INA]* 25
Released Frenchman, Delegation Depart *[INA]* 25
AFP: Last Western Prisoners Head for Home 25
Army on Alert in al-Basrah After Agents' Deaths *[IRNA]* 25
Execution, Dismissal for Coup Role Reported *[Voice of the Iraqi Islamic Revolution]* 26
Action Said Taken Against Dissident Officers *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 14 Dec]* 26
Regime Said Abducting, Killing Citizens in Karkuk *[Voice of the People of Kurdistan]* 26
'Bloody Confrontations' in Kurdistan Reported *[INA]* 26
Iranian Bid To 'Destabilize the Region' Seen *[AFP]* 27
Sources: Regime Planning 'Military Action' *[Voice of the Iraqi Islamic Revolution]* 27
Resistance Said Behind Blast at Regime Center *[Voice of the Iraqi Islamic Revolution]* 27
'Ferocious Campaign' Against Iraqi Writers Scored *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 14 Dec]* 27

ISRAEL

Peres Optimistic Obstacles Will Be Overcome *[Rome LA REPUBBLICA 15 Dec]* 28
Peres Predicts Treaty With Jordan Imminent *[Milan PANORAMA 19 Dec]* 29
Peres on Deportees, 'Arafat's Mental State *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 30
U.S. Said Holding Information on Syrian Stands *[Jerusalem New Channel TV]* 31
Sources Deny Proposing Truce Deal With Hamas *[Jerusalem TV]* 32
Gaza Settlers Move to Permanent Housing Approved *[Jerusalem Radio]* 32
Arab Killed, 'At Least' 15 Injured in Clashes *[Jerusalem Radio]* 32

JORDAN

U.S. Senate Delegation Concludes Talks, Visit 33
Army Chief Receives Delegation *[Amman Radio]* 33
Prince Hasan Meets 2 U.S. Delegations *[Amman TV]* 33
Delegation Ends Visit, Departs *[Amman Radio]* 33
Palestinian Affairs Attached to al-Majali's Office *[AL-NAHAR 13 Dec]* 33
Paper Scorns Outcome of 'Arafat-Rabin Meeting *[AL-RAY 14 Dec]* 33
'Arafat Urged To Pick 'Responsible' Advisers *[SAWT AL-SHAB 12 Dec]* 34

Palestinians at University Protest Pay Delay *[JORDAN TIMES 15 Dec]* 34

LEBANON

Buwayz Interviewed on Peace, U.S. Relations *[Beirut Radio]* 35
U.S. Ambassador 'Secretly' Arrives at Embassy *[VOL]* 35
Gulf Investors: $230 Million to Beirut Rebuilding *[RFL]* 35
Israeli Shelling, Resistance Attack Reported *[VOL]* 35
Resistance Attacks Israeli Posts *[VOM]* 35

SYRIA

Iranian First Vice President Continues Visit 36
Confers With al-Asad *[Damascus Radio]* 36
Holds Meetings With Lebanese Leaders *[Tehran Radio]* 36
Meets Palestinian Opposition Leaders *[Tehran Radio]* 36
Supports Stand Against 'Zionist Regime' *[IRNA]* 36
Rabbi Refutes Israeli Allegations on Conditions *[Damascus Radio]* 37
Radio Stresses 'No Compromise' Over Golan *[Damascus Radio]* 37
Talks' Progress Depends on Israeli Policy Change *[Damascus Radio]* 38
Importance of al-Asad-al-Hirawi Summit Viewed *[Damascus Radio]* 38
U.S. Awareness of Syria's 'Key Role' Seen *[Damascus Radio]* 39

SOUTH ASIA

Iran

Commentary on Habibi's Visit to Syria *[Tehran Radio]* 41
$10 Million Reportedly Granted to Hamas *[AL SHIRA' 13 Dec]* 41
Besharati Claims Turkey Will Expel MKO Members *[AFP]* 41
Commentary on Bhutto's Visit to Turkey *[Tehran Radio]* 42
Economic Cooperation Accord Signed With Finland *[Tehran Radio]* 42
Daily Regrets GCC Spending Oil Revenue on Arms *[IRNA]* 42
Alviri Interviewed on Oil Price Decline *[IRNA]* 43
Commentary Expresses Concern Over Oil Prices *[Tehran Radio]* 43
Increase in Nonoil Exports Noted *[Tehran Radio]* 44
Report Details Privatization of Industries *[Voice of Iranian Kordestan]* 44
Roundtable Discusses Decline of Student Activity *[Tehran TV]* 44

Sudan's Abu-Salih Views IGADD Initiative

EA1412164493 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Foreign Minister Husayn Sulayman Abu-Salih has announced that the committee of the Intergovernment Authority on Drought and Development [IGADD] foreign ministers charged with resolving the problem of the south will submit its recommendations to the leaders of the four states following the meeting it is due to hold in January. Speaking from the forum of the Foreign Ministry today, his excellency stated that the foreign ministers of the IGADD grouping had met in Nairobi last week under the chairmanship of the Kenyan foreign minister to review earlier peace negotiations between the government and the rebel movement.

His excellency went on to refer to the meetings of the Sudanese-Ethiopian ministerial joint committee to be held in Khartoum from 15 to 22 December. He said the committee will assess the agreements and protocols concluded between the two countries over the past two years.

Dr. Abu-Salih stated that the United Nations second committee had recently issued a resolution on relief work in Sudan. The resolution had praised the cooperation of the Sudanese Government with the United Nations in the operations to provide the needs with relief materials. His excellency the minister said that the resolution had been put forward by Algeria.

His excellency went on to refer to the report of Gaspar Biro, rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Committee, on Sudan. He said Biro's mission had not yet ended, particularly with respect to the part which related to the rebel movement. The minister said that Gaspar Biro's report contradicted the facts on human rights in Sudan.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Syria's al-'Allaf Meets Arab League Chief

NC1412174593 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat Abd-al-Majid today received Muwaffaq al-'Allaf, head of the Syrian delegation to the peace talks in Washington, who is currently visiting Egypt to participate in the coordination meeting of the Joint Arab-Foreign Chambers of Commerce. After the meeting, al-'Allaf said that he and 'Abd-al-Majid reviewed the current situation in the peace process. He stressed that Syria wants the Palestinians to obtain their rights as quickly as possible. He noted that the recent efforts have had a great effect on the resumption of the peace process, particularly the expected summit between Syrian President al-Asad and U.S. President Clinton in January.

Palestinian Affairs

Hamas Said To Reject Israeli Cease-Fire Proposal

EA1412181093 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 14 Dec 93 p 2

[Text] Amman, QUDS PRESS—Informed Palestinian sources have said that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] rejected a recent Israeli proposal to conclude "a truce" and discuss a mutual cease-fire.

The sources said that a senior Israeli official met in November with Hamas activists imprisoned in Israeli jails. He presented the proposal to them so that they would relay it to the Hamas leadership.

The sources added that Amnon Shahaq, Israeli deputy chief of staff and head of the Israeli delegation at the Taba talks for implementing the self-rule agreement, initiated those meetings under instructions from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. Doron Almog, commander of Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip, participated in the meetings.

The sources, which preferred to remain anonymous, stressed that Israel proposed to free prominent Hamas figures imprisoned in Israeli jails provided that they relay the Israeli proposal to the Hamas leadership abroad.

The Israelis expressed readiness to make concessions in return for Hamas ceasing its armed military operations against Israeli targets. Those concessions included consent for Hamas to play a basic role in administering the coming stage, release of Hamas activists from prison, and reduction in long prison sentences issued against some Hamas leaders.

The Israeli officials justified their proposal on the basis of the weakness of the PLO and its inability to assume authority in the self-rule area with the presence of strong internal opposition figures.

The sources emphasized that the Hamas leadership rejected the Israeli proposal in principle and renewed its commitment to resisting the occupation. It announced its refusal to accept any proposal on the release of prisoners or to share the self-rule powers in return for concessions on the principle of "armed struggle."

It has been learned that the Israeli officials refrained from presenting their proposals to Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, Hamas' spiritual leader, who has been in jail since 1989 and who has been sentenced to life imprisonment plus 15 years. They sufficed with meeting Hamas military and security commanders.

Palestinian sources have pointed out that Israel seeks to exploit any such meetings to pressure the PLO in a bid to force it to make concessions at the stalled talks on implementing the self-rule accord.

Fatah Hawks Threaten Revenge on 18 Israelis

JN1512084693 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 15 Dec 93 p 32

[By Tawfiq 'Abid]

[Text] The "Fatah Hawks" operating in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have threatened to take revenge on 18 Israeli security and military figures. Those figures are at the top of the list because they committed ugly crimes against the Palestinian people and directly participated in liquidating a large number of strugglers.

The Fatah Hawks warned the Zionist enemy against continuing to pursue the wanted, especially those who were not taken in by the enemy's trick asking them to surrender, along with their weapons.

AL-DUSTUR has received a copy of a statement circulated widely in the occupied territories, saying military orders have been issued to the Special Groups and the Fatah Hawks to hunt down and execute the killers. The statement classified those people under three categories: dangerous; very dangerous; very, very dangerous.

The statement disclosed that the Revolutionary Observation Agency managed to obtain a list from the enemy of 810 of our people's strugglers inside and outside the occupied territories. They are on a list of people to be pursued and liquidated. The Israeli enemy's security agencies say these people pose a threat to Palestinian national security and the entity of the Hebrew state, now and in the future. The security agencies say they will remove this threat, using whatever means.

The statement also denounced defeatist spoken and written statements by some PLO officials, and by the political committees, whom the statement characterized as "agent", after having denounced armed struggle and confronting the occupation troops and settlers. The statement added: We will not allow the political committees to reach leadership posts and conspire against the strugglers and fighters of our people, through direct and indirect coordination with the enemy agencies. This is meant to pave the way for these agencies to achieve their goals. What is taking place in the Gaza Strip in particular, and in the occupied Palestinian territories in general, is nothing but a prelude to this scheme.

The statement also said that the rumored dissolution of the formations of the western Strip and the rumor that its cadre will embrace political action is a "cheap lie." The people who stand behind these lies are well known to us. We can silence those people at the right time, the statement said. The occupied land's apparatus, in all its major cadres inside and outside the territories, as well as its military cells, shall keep its weapons and maintain Fatah and its goals and principles, until the last soldier and settler are driven out of our land.

The statement went on: We will not stand idly about the conspiracy of dismantling Fatah and turning it into an auxiliary agency for the enemy. We will do our best to protect the revolution. The conspiracy that aims to exclude and marginalize Fatah shall not succeed, at whatever price.

The Fatah Hawks have decided to abolish all previous decisions on Fatah appointments for organizational posts in the occupied territories. They expressed the need for holding Fatah conferences to produce alternate leaders in all posts in the Palestinian territories. They also said they will not give up the Palestinian people's right to have all their sons and daughters released from the Zionist occupation's jails, whatever the charges against them.

The statement said the enemy's crimes against our people are a thousand times more atrocious and severe than any struggling Palestinian reaction against occupation.

Habash on Struggle, 'Arafat, Islamic Revival

NC1412213593 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 7 Dec 93 p 11

[Interview with George Habash, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, PFLP, by Muna Sukkariyah, in the former's office in Damascus; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Sukkariyah] We always like to inquire about your health and morale.

[Habash] I feel great and this is not merely a statement for the media. As to my health, I do not have any problems now. My morale is as it has always been. However, I feel now that we are facing a stage that is somewhat different from all the earlier stages of the Palestinian and pan-Arab struggle against the Zionist cancer. At the same time, I am perfectly confident that our cause is just and that we have no other recourse but to pursue the struggle until we destroy this danger. Of course, it is the fashion now to say that we no longer view Israel as we did and that it is possible that it might live in peace with us. It is my duty to examine closely this statement and ask myself: Is it really possible for this cancer to live in peace with the Arab society?

I search my memory and look to history and I reach the following conclusion: I cannot give an answer on the basis of illusions or wishes, but on the basis of facts. What are the historical facts, ever since the first Zionist congress was held up until this moment? The conclusion is that the Zionist scheme has historically been linked with colonialism, at first with British colonialism and later, after World War II, with imperialism. Hence, we cannot separate our position on this Zionist scheme from our position on colonialism and imperialism. [passage omitted]

[Sukkariyah] Then we can say that you view this stage as a settlement, not a peace?

[Habash] Peace has its expressions. On the personal level, for example, in the opinion of the young people you see in this room peace means returning to Palestine. It means that Khalil can go back to Haifa and I can go

back to Lod, etc. This is how we see peace: A people's democratic Palestine where all people lead a real life. This is my view of peace. Any other peace is merely an interim phase.

[Sukkariyah] Perhaps the current and future generations need to use a language different from that of the past. Does the theoretician Dr. George Habash have any ideas about this subject?

[Habash] This is an important question. In fact, I do not want to give an answer. I believe that the decisive answer should come through meetings among the undespairing forces: leftist, Marxist, patriotic, pan-Arab, and political-Islamist organizations. These forces must get together and think of an answer to your question. Additionally, the answer must come from all generations: my older generation and the younger generation. We must think of get-togethers that do not necessarily occur inside rooms but through interactions and via the media. These get-togethers must include all the above forces to get an answer. I am not being evasive. However, if you insist I have an answer.

[Sukkariyah] Tell us.

[Habash] We must think of a new program of pan-Arabism that benefits from all the experiences of the previous program. The answer I give on the Palestinian level is that we must study all the stages of the Palestinian struggle since 1936 and draw morals from them. We can then outline the principles of a new confrontation. [passage omitted]

[Sukkariyah] Do you have a new program in the works?

[Habash] This is for young people to do.

[Sukkariyah] Have you retired?

[Habash] No, no. I am speaking sincerely: As long as I am alive I will remain a struggler for my nation's and people's cause.

[Sukkariyah] Intellectually, who is George Habash today?

[Habash] A Marxist, naturally. I have passed through several experiences that have made me feel that Marxism determines the scientific principles on the basis of which we can understand history. One of these principles is class struggle.

[Sukkariyah] Frankly, how can today's generation feel inclined to listen to such talk about Marxism when it has been defeated in its country of origin?

[Habash] I will advise them to read about dialectical materialism, which is the basis of Marxism.

[Sukkariyah] They don't have the time!

[Habash] It was the errors, certain applications, and certain aspects of understanding Marxism that were defeated. As to the Marxist line itself, events have demonstrated its soundness. An American intellectual has said: "We are the only ones who apply Marxism."

[Sukkariyah] In the United States?!

[Habash] Yes, in the United States.

[Sukkariyah] It appears that at this stage only the Islamists are confronting what George Habash is also confronting. I mean, their role is more prominent now than that of the Marxists.

[Habash] As a Marxist I tell them: bravo. However, I wish to note that the Islamists won all this popular backing because they confronted imperialist schemes in connection with the Palestinian issue and other Third World issues. However, the Islamic revival is not represented by that Islamic policy or those Islamic forces who are bedfellows of imperialism and its schemes. Islamic revival is represented only by Hizballah and Hamas. Based on this, we welcome this Islamic revival and ally ourselves with it. [passage omitted]

[Sukkariyah] The Madrid conference is two years old. During this time you have met Yasir 'Arafat. What did he tell you? Does George Habash feel that 'Arafat has deceived him?

[Habash] First of all, I met him only twice during this period. It was my hope, my comrades in the PFLP political bureau used to say that the issue.... (he does not finish his sentence) Frankly, we did not expect Yasir 'Arafat to descend to this level. We knew that he was bargaining with the imperialist scheme; that his policy was totally different from ours, and that he took into account the international and Arab situation, perhaps much more than necessary. We knew that we could not judge him by revolutionary standards, indeed we sometimes realized we could not judge him by patriotic standards. Nevertheless, we never imagined that 'Arafat would descend to such a level. On the contrary, we agreed that he could become president of a Palestinian state. It is difficult for us to believe that he has agreed to become a mayor.

[Sukkariyah] What words would you use to describe him?

[Habash] Let me think. He has surrendered, in the full sense of the word.

[Sukkariyah] Do you remember if 'Arafat ever spoke sincerely and frankly to you?

[Habash] To be truthful, yes.

[Sukkariyah] After the Madrid conference?

[Habash] No. After this experience, I feel that he was trying to reduce our opposition to his policy.

[Sukkariyah] How did you learn of the Gaza-Jericho agreement, from the news on television? Did you find it unexpected or had you been informed of it?

[Habash] I had not been informed of it. I had felt something, though. Once, shortly before 13 September, 'Arafat announced that he was willing to meet the "doctor" (George Habash) anywhere, in Tunis, Jordan, Yemen, just anywhere because he wanted my opinion, as he put it, on an important and fundamental matter. Our political bureau felt that 'Arafat needed a cover of some sort from George Habash. We adopted a position: No meeting.

[Sukkariyah] This means that you did not know what subject he wanted to talk about?

[Habash] No, but we smelled something.

[Sukkariyah] If you had met him before 13 September and learned of the Gaza-Jericho agreement, what would you have done?

[Habash] I would have exposed him.

[Sukkariyah] Could you have stopped him?

[Habash] It is not possible, not possible. I wish I could have stopped him.

[Sukkariyah] Would you use violence against him?

[Habash] No.

[Sukkariyah] How much do you believe in the effectiveness of the 10 factions [opposed to 'Arafat], apart from their miserable financial situation?

[Habash] We must examine the points of agreement and the points of disagreement among the factions and the ways in which they can be remedied. This is the PFLP's view. Politically, there are three basic issues to consider: The struggle against the Gaza-Jericho agreement; the struggle to delegitimize 'Arafat and the Oslo Group; and the process of rebuilding the PLO on the basis of its covenant, the program of return, national independence, and the goal of establishing a democratic state. There is agreement among us over these issues in connection with our opposition to the Gaza-Jericho agreement. As to the question of establishing a state, some parties do not accept it. As to the differences, they lie in ideological matters, tactics, and ways of mobilizing our people to confront the agreement. We have some basic differences here. If we can consolidate the points over which we agree and postpone the discussion over our differences, I can say that the 10 factions can succeed.

[Sukkariyah] What was the cruelest report you ever heard?

[Habash] The fall of Jerusalem in 1967. I wept bitterly on that day.

[Sukkariyah] What was your reaction when you watched the signing ceremony of the Gaza-Jericho agreement at the White House?

[Habash] My feelings were contradictory. I felt that our masses should shout in 'Arafat's face, telling him he should fall (I apologize for inappropriate terms here). It was a provocation. I said 'Arafat would regret it and that our people would overthrow him.

[Sukkariyah] What do you see in the Bir Zayt University elections?

[Habash] They indicated success and demonstrated the importance of forging an alliance between democratic and Islamic forces. These elections were an indication of the policy that can overthrow the Gaza-Jericho agreement.

PFLP Holds 1st Public Convention in Gaza

FA1312125093 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 13 Dec 93 p 12

[Report by 'Amira Hess]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The Gaza branch of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] marked its 26th anniversary yesterday with the first public convention in its history. Representatives of every political faction, both supporters and opponents of the agreement, were invited to address the convention. Some 2,000 people were crowded in the city's cultural center, which had been closed throughout the intifadah years and reopened only a month ago.

Attorney Yunis al-Jaru opened the convention by reading a long resolution proposal on behalf of the PFLP leadership. Although the audience may have been under the impression that the proposal reflected the Damascus stands, it also reflected the more moderate stands of the Gaza Strip branch of the PFLP, whose members' identity is never disclosed. The speech featured the usual slogans voicing opposition to the agreement. The speech promised that the PFLP will continue to work to foil the agreement, emphasizing the general principle that the alternative to the agreement lies in continued struggle through all accessible means. The audience noticed that the phrase "armed struggle" was omitted.

The organizers said that the main message of the convention and of the leadership's speech lies in the promise to conduct democratic political life within Palestinian society under the new conditions. The speech stated that the PFLP will participate in the elections only if they are truly democratic and if their results are not predetermined. The organizers asserted that the convention is proof that democratic life is possible.

Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi was the first guest to take the podium. He reiterated his pronouncement that while the agreement is not good, the Palestinian people should accept it as a fact and take advantage of it to improve their condition. [passage omitted]

[Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew on 13 December carries an ITIM report on page 1, adding: "A leaflet signed by the Unified National Leadership of the Intifadah, which was distributed yesterday, is the first to express support for

the peace process while warning Israel not to shirk its commitments to the Palestinians and to the agreed timetable.

["The leaflet calls on the Palestinian people to be patient, because it is time to test Israel's credibility and desire to reach true peace. The leaflet goes on to say that Israel should prove that the man who speaks constantly of peace is able to prove it by deed—as the Palestinians have done. According to the leaflet, 13 December is the day that will test Israel's intentions."]

Deportee Spokesman Views PLO Leadership, Plans

NC1412115593 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 11 Dec 93 p 12

[Interview with Palestinian deportees' spokesman Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rantisi by Hanadi Salman in Marj al-Zuhur, south Lebanon; date not given]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] [Salman] Won't the measures expected to be taken against you when you return to the occupied territories limit your actions?

[Al-Rantisi] In view of our creed we find that the difficulties surrounding us can only fortify us and therefore will double our actions. The deportation was one of the strongest blows dealt to the Islamic movement, but it emerged from it stronger and more powerful. [passage omitted]

[Salman] What are your action plans if you are detained once you return back?

[Al-Rantisi] I say that detention is death. But because of the strong repression suffered by the Palestinian people since the deportation, a relapse of the movement is doubtful and cannot happen.

[Salman] Following the signing of the Gaza-Jericho agreement, you said that the confrontation with the occupation would continue and that the agreement would result in "a grinding war." But Shaykh Ahmas Yasin, founder of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] called for a truce and for participation in the elections on condition that they are legislative ones.

[Al-Rantisi] Yes. One of the calculated dangers of the agreement, and which the signatories are working to bring about, is to ignite a civil war. The Jews are waiting for this war to empty the Palestinian territories of our people through emigration. We have the Lebanese experience as an example. Tens of thousands of Lebanese left as a result of the civil war. This is what the Israelis are hoping to get out of this agreement; this is their objective. Shaykh Yasin urged that there be no inter-Palestinian fighting so that the Israelis will have no opportunity to achieve their purpose. At the same time, he called on the Palestinian people to retain the jihad as their other option. But he also said that there is another solution, a truce; that is, a truce for a limited time. The Islamic creed allows us to do this. A truce means no conflict between the Palestinian people and the Jews, a complete Jewish withdrawal from all Palestinian soil occupied after 1967, and nonrecognition of the Zionist entity. This means that we retain the conditions of nonrecognition and complete withdrawal. Then there will be a truce on the borders, as is the case, for example, with Syria. There is a truce between Syria and Israel but no recognition. Similar conditions apply to Jordan and also to Egypt. This is what the shaykh wants. As a plan for this stage, I believe it is a mature and good one for a 10-year solution.

[Salman] The truce between Syria and Israel is between two internationally recognized states but the Palestinians do not have a state yet.

[Al-Rantisi] The Palestinian people will be free when the withdrawal is completed. They will be able to determine their own fate and hence establish their entity on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip without recognizing Israel. The crucial point is the recognition of the state of Israel. The Islamic movement does not recognize this state at all because, in the movement's view, Yafo, Haifa, 'Akko, and Kefar Rosh Haniqra are the same as Gaza and Jerusalem, which is a sacred and an Islamic piece of land. We do not differentiate between one piece and any other. Therefore the Islamic movement is not willing to relinquish a single inch of Palestinian soil and hence is not willing to recognize the state of Israel.

[Salman] But, in that case, the Islamic movement will operate in a Palestinian state or entity that recognizes the state of Israel. Has the PLO signed a recognition document?

[Al-Rantisi] Shaykh Yasin's proposal will be realized on the ruins and debris of the agreement that was signed and not through it.

[Salman] Then the conditions for the truce proposed by the shaykh do not exist yet. Will it be a deferred truce?

[Al-Rantisi] The shaykh is proposing a political solution that is an alternative to the Gaza-Jericho agreement and not a solution based on that agreement. [passage omitted]

[Salman] Is the Islamic movement expecting the agreement to fail and therefore offering the alternative?

[Al-Rantisi] We are expecting the Palestinian people to resist the agreement with the same intensity they resisted the occupation. [passage omitted]

[Salman] You previously said that the Israelis will sow internal dissent.

[Al-Rantisi] This is expected in the future. Now there is a liquidation campaign among those competing for power in the self-rule.

[Salman] Within the PLO?

[Al-Rantisi] Within Fatah.

[Salman] Does this mean that you do not rule out the PLO's participation in the assassination campaigns against opposition figures?

[Al-Rantisi] So far I believe that the police personnel, who have been chosen as a tool to persecute the Palestinian people, are the sons of our people, are aware of our people's sufferings and grievances, and belong to this people. Therefore, prompted by their conscience, ethics, and dignity, the police personnel will not agree to act as shields protecting the Israeli soldier or settler or confronting the stones hurled at these soldiers and settlers. Accordingly, I do not expect them to accept the role planned for them.

[Salman] In a statement to AL-SAFIR, the Hamas representative in Amman, Muhammad al-Nazzal, said that the PLO is a national asset that must be safeguarded and its institutions must be rebuilt. He also said that the Palestinian national charter must be adhered to. How?

[Al-Rantisi] We believe that the PLO is the fruit of the Palestinian people, and nobody can play havoc with it or abandon it. There are people trying to destroy the PLO under the pretext of the so-called Gaza-Jericho peace accord. Therefore, we are against this trend.

[Salman] How do you plan to rebuild the PLO?

[Al-Rantisi] There is coordination among the 10 organizations and the Fatah members who reject the accord. Those will reach a specific common formula to produce a new PLO leadership.

[Salman] Do you mean an alternative leadership for the PLO?

[Al-Rantisi] The PLO no longer has a leadership.

[Salman] You mean the same PLO but with an alternative leadership?

[Al-Rantisi] Certainly we will preserve the PLO. Any leadership that does not represent the Palestinian public is not legitimate.

[Salman] Shaykh Ahmad Yasin said that the themes in his message which was smuggled to you from prison are not final and are still open to debate. Has the Hamas Consultative Council ended its deliberations on these themes?

[Al-Rantisi] Shaykh Ahmad Yasin is Hamas' leader. As far as I know, Hamas always makes its decisions through consultations. There absolutely no dictatorships in Hamas. Hence, Shaykh Ahmad Yasin's message was addressed to all the sons of Hamas inside and outside the occupied territories as well as in prison. Such messages are studied carefully by all the Hamas bodies. I have no information now about what is going on concerning the message.

[Salman] Can you explain to us Shaykh Yasin's themes as he presented them and not the way the media interpreted them? Also, does his call for participation in the elections apply to the elections scheduled soon to be held in the occupied territories in accordance with the Oslo agreement?

[Al-Rantisi] What Shaykh Yasin meant is completely different. He rejects advance conditions for these elections. He rejects imposing the agreement on the voters. Shaykh Yasin wants the elections be crystal clear. He rejects the election of an executive committee. But he would accept the election of a legislative committee, a Palestinian parliament, which should reject the agreement and announce a policy of continued armed struggle. That is what Shaykh Yasin wants, without preset conditions and without any restrictions imposed on him. If there are free elections for a legislative council, the Islamic movement will be ready to play its role. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Deportees To Return Home 15 Dec

Deportees Receive Notification

NC1412133993 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 12 Dec 93

[Text] The Palestinian deportees in Marj al-Zuhur have announced that they will return to their country tomorrow, Wednesday [15 December]. They pointed out that they received a notification from the Israeli authorities to this effect.

A private car passed through the Zummarayya crossing point and arrived at the deportee camp at noon today. The driver handed to deportee spokesman Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz a message from the Israeli authorities that included a list of 215 deportees and the time of return which, according to news correspondents in Marj al-Zuhur, will be 0800 tomorrow.

An Israeli bulldozer opened the Zummarayya crossing shortly before the car passed through. Al-Rantisi kissed the car to shouts of rejoicing from his fellow deportees. He said: We all miss Palestine.

Al-Rantisi, however, expects the Israeli authorities to arrest him on his return.

Our correspondent has learned that 18 deportees who have chosen not to return will be distributed among the refugee camps in Lebanon.

[Paris AFP in English at 1203 GMT on 14 December in a related Marj al-Zuhur-datelined report by Michel Moutot adds the following:

["The letter [authorizing the return], delivered by a Lebanese taxi driver, called on the deportees to show up early Wednesday at the Zummarayya crossing into Israel's "security zone" on the border."

[AFP adds: "In Jerusalem, defence ministry spokesman Oded Ben Ami confirmed the deportees would be taken back on Wednesday. 'They will be detained for processing and most of them will remain in jail' he told AFP."

[AFP adds: "'We have triumphed because we are going back with our heads high,' said deportees' spokesman 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rantisi, a leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS).

["The Israeli letter gave a list of 214 deportees allowed to return, but less than 200 were expected to show up at Zummarayya on Wednesday.

["Sixteen of the deportees have opted not to return and left the camp with false identity papers to avoid imprisonment."]

Deportees Leave Marj al-Zuhur Camp

NC1512082093 Shamayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic 0800 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] After 363 days of deportation, the Palestinian deportees left Marj al-Zuhur camp [in southern Lebanon] for home this morning. REUTER said the first batch of returnees crossed into the occupied territories just before 0930. It should be mentioned that the returning deportees will be detained to question them and decide who can go home and who will stay in jail.

Israelis Prepare for Deportees Return

NC1312125593 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1145 GMT 13 Dec 93

[Report by Dahir Abu-Hamdan from Rashayya]

[Text] Israeli forces have begun practical measures at the Zummarayya crossing to prepare to receive the last group of (?119) Palestinian deportees from Marj al-Zuhur Camp who will return to their homes after a forced expulsion of 363 days.

An Israeli force of two armored cars, a truck, and 20 soldiers arrived at Zummarayya crossing this morning. The force began to prepare the crossing gate, install water reservoirs, and pitch tents ready for the return of the deportees scheduled for Wednesday [15 December].

Artillery shelled Birkat Mimis and the hills around the deportees camp at dawn today. The shelling originated from South Lebanese Army [SLA] posts in Zummarayya and Zaghlah inside the border strip. Ten mortar shells fell in the area causing only material damage.

Official Denounces Israeli Actions, Accord

JN1412174593 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Sulayman al-Najjab, head of the PLO Social Department and leader of the PLO delegation to the meetings of the Arab labor and social affairs ministers, has condemned the Zionist entity's unjust practices against Arab citizens, as well as its attempts to devour more Arab territories.

In a statement to a correspondent of the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY in Cairo, al-Najjab stressed that the Palestinian-Zionist agreement has many loopholes, is absolutely unfair to the Palestinian side, and cannot achieve the minimum aspirations and requirements of the Palestinian Arab people and their long struggle since 1948.

Al-Najjab added that the Zionist entity exploited the Declaration of Principles in order to achieve political and propaganda goals and to persuade the world that it is seeking peace. But, he added, it still plans to occupy and retain more Arab territories, to bargain over the release of the Palestinian detainees and prisoners, and to threaten even the PLO from time to time to force it to make further concessions.

'Intense Dismay' Noted at Delay in Implementation

TA1412160593 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 15 Dec 93 pp 1, 7

[Excerpt] The Gaza Strip—Palestinians expressed their intense dismay and disappointment at the delay in implementing the Declaration of Principles accord and at the postponement of Israeli withdrawal. Some of them said that this was not unexpected but anticipated and proves lack of Israeli seriousness and credibility. It arouses Palestinian doubts about the Israelis' adherence to their commitments.

Dr. Zakariya al-Agha, Palestinian delegation member and leader of Fatah in Gaza, said that the delay arouses doubts about the Israelis' seriousness and credibility in meeting their obligations. This is not encouraging. It increases frustration among Palestinians and is an indication of the procrastination being pursued by the Israeli Government. Al-Agha expressed fear that the delay of the date which the Palestinians were awaiting impatiently might have an adverse effect on them. He said that if this delay will be for a short time resulting in Israeli adherence to what has been signed and to an agreement acceptable to the Palestinians, then the situation will not be grave. However, al-Agha warned of unexpected reaction by Palestinians if the delay period increases. He stressed that the Palestinian people are seeking their freedom and independence and have the right to search for any means to achieve their goal if the peace process fails to do so. [passage omitted]

Israeli Stances Blamed for Implementation Failure

TA1412184193 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 13 Dec 93 p 9

[Editorial: "So That the Delay Will Not Be a Precedent and the Elements of Frustration Will Not Grow"]

[Text] On the eve of the presumed date to begin implementing the declaration of principles, the Palestinian-Israeli summit ended in Cairo without any specific results. Although no one expected the summit to produce decisive results that would resolve all the fundamental points of disagreement, the fact that no announcement was made on solving any of those points arouses, in reality, a new disappointment and creates more frustration not only at the depth of the existing differences but also at the implications of this summit's results in terms of Israel's adherence to the same positions. Those positions have been an impediment to reaching agreement on arrangements for implementing the Oslo accord.

Since the signing of the Oslo accord on 13 September and following the numerous and lengthy negotiating sessions and two summit meetings, it has become more obvious than ever that the existing differences are not just over minor details relating to the method and mechanism of implementing the accord but over fundamental points that constitute the basis for the form and content of the interim period. Those differences are about the concept of security, control over border crossings, the size of the Jericho area, and other issues each of which reflects a clear contradiction between the Palestinian and Israeli positions. Whereas in dealing with all the pending issues the Palestinian position focuses on the need of making progress toward ending the occupation and highlighting the national identity of the newborn Palestinian entity, the Israeli position adheres to the manifestations and contents of the occupation, attempting to formulate an agreement that bestows legitimacy on these manifestations and contents in obvious contradiction of the spirit of peace.

From this premise and despite the fact that the Palestinian-Israeli summit provided a 10-day delay in the hope of reaching agreement during this period, which will end with another summit, this delay will not lead to the aspired for goal if Israel does not change many of its positions, which since the beginning of the talks have been the main obstacle to making progress on arrangements for implementing the accord.

However, although implementation of the agreement has been delayed for 10 days and although this is not a long time if there are genuine intentions to reach agreement during this period, the danger in the delay is that it might be used in the future as a precedent for disregarding other timetables in the agreement with all the ensuing perils from Israeli procrastination and foot-dragging. On the other hand, this delay arouses doubts about the seriousness of adhering to agreements that are signed. All this in an unenviable situation where there are elements of frustration and tension. Consequently, any delay will bolster those elements and provide them with an opportunity to grow and influence.

In sum, if Israel is indeed committed to the agreements and undertakings that it has signed, and to solving the conflict with the Palestinian side on the basis of ending the occupation and respecting the rights, identity, and aspirations of the Palestinian party with whom it is negotiating, it should remove the obstacles epitomized by its positions on the issues under discussion.

Rabin Seen as 'Loser' After Withdrawal Delay

PM1512102794 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 14 Dec 93 p 11

[Editorial: "Rabin Is the Loser, Not the Palestinians"]

[Text] That 13 December has passed without any Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho under the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles agreement does not harm the PLO as much as it harms Yitzhak Rabin's government. It also proves to the world as a whole Israel's noncompliance with international agreements and failure to honor its pledges.

Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat could have made his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin a successful meeting from which to emerge smiling before the television cameras awaiting him at the joint press conference if he had accepted the Israeli interpretations of the agreement. But he did not, and preferred for the withdrawal not to be carried out and for the set date to pass as if nothing had happened.

If we examine the points of disagreement, we will find that they center on three main issues relating to sovereignty. They are control of the crossings, the settlements and their security, and the size of the Jericho area.

Israel does not want any Palestinian control of the crossing points to Jericho from Jordan and to the Gaza Strip from Sinai. It is also refusing to allow borders to be controlled by anyone other than its Army. And it is expressing its concerns that arms might be smuggled to the Palestinian authority which will run the areas from which Israeli forces are to withdraw.

As for the settlements, the disagreement revolves around the settlements in the Gaza Strip. They are no more than 18 settlements inhabited by some 4,000 settlers, most of whom spend the nights outside for fear of Palestinian attacks. Israel wants to put them under the Israeli Army's protection and to prevent any Palestinian security forces from coming close to them. Yet it also wants these forces to foil any attempt to attack the settlements in the future—which reflects an incomprehensible and untenable contradiction.

There are two views among Palestinian leadership circles with regard to these Israeli demands. The first urges adherence to sovereignty and the literal complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area in accordance with the Israeli, British, and Jordanian borders. The second view urges acceptance of the Israeli interpretation of the agreement and Israel's observation of the crossings and the borders, because self-rule does not mean sovereignty and the Declaration of Principles agreement did not stipulate independence, but self-rule

It is clear from the failure of the 'Arafat-Rabin summit in Cairo that the Palestinian president chose the second [as published] view, and he was right to do so. Because the people of the occupied territories are waiting for an Israeli withdrawal, not a redeployment of the Israeli forces. And they also want full sovereignty over all the territory controlled by the Palestinian National Authority.

By virtue of their long struggle experience the Palestinian people are capable of distinguishing between independence and concealed occupation. Israel wants to continue its occupation and delude them through formal withdrawals that change nothing in reality.

The Palestinian leadership did well to refuse to espouse the Israeli tactics to deceive its people. The agreement already has numerous defects and loopholes and does not need incomplete implementation, devoiding it of the few positive aspects it contains.

Certainly the occupied territories will rage in anger as a result of this deceptive Israeli position. And those opposed to the agreement will find new ammunition to continue their attacks on the agreement. But Israel will lose more than the PLO, both in the short and long term. And it has to bear the consequences of its fatal mistakes in the coming days.

As for the Palestinian people, who have fought for the sake of peace for over 45 years, they can wait another 10 days for the last test for the Israel Government and its seriousness vis-a-vis peace.

OPEC Affairs

Measures Needed To Stop Drop in Oil Prices

NC1512092193 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Commentary by the News Commentaries Group]

[Text] Incoming reports indicate that the Omani Government has stated that starting in January 1994, which is only 15 days away, it is to reduce its daily oil production between 5 and 10 percent in order to help boost oil prices in international markets. This stance by the Omani Government came after discussions that the Qatari energy minister and OPEC chairman had with Omani officials.

The unexpected drop in oil prices despite the OPEC members' observance of set production ceilings strengthened the belief that uncontrollable oil production by non-OPEC members is the main element responsible for the drop in prices and that steps should be taken to control this element in order to prevent price reductions. Following this, the Qatari chairman of OPEC called on non-OPEC members to reduce their production in order to prevent the reduction in oil prices and to allow the oil market to return to its true position.

The severe cold, especially in the major oil consuming countries, has not had any practical affect on the fluctuations in oil prices. Until now, major non-OPEC oil producers, especially Russia and Mexico which have the highest non-OPEC production, have not responded to the request by the OPEC secretary general on reducing their production, but OPEC has not given up hopes in its new efforts. Until now, the only positive reply has come from Oman; this was positive, but it will not have a major impact on the oil market by itself.

Experts believe that even though the reduction in oil prices actually stems from the economic recession in the West and that this recession is the reason the oil produced in the West and Russia is exported to oil markets instead of being used at home, the role played by the large producers in OPEC and outside OPEC has also been effective as far as the current pricing situation is concerned. The adoption of an offensive policy by the oil-producing countries in a bid to return oil prices to their true position dictates that a new effort toward a systematic and orderly reduction in production be exerted.

Algeria

Twelve Croats, Bosnians Killed Near Blida

NC1512115993 Paris AFP in English 1135 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] Algiers, Dec 15 (AFP)—Twelve Croats and Bosnians, all Christians, were killed Tuesday at Tamezguida, near Blida, south of Algiers, security officials said.

The victims, technicians on a hydro-electric project working for an Algerian company, were apparently stabbed to death, although the precise circumstances of the killings were not known, the officials said. They attributed the action to an "armed group", without specifying.

The number of foreigners killed in Algeria since September 21, when Moslem fundamentalists began targetting expatriates whom they accuse of collaborating with the government they are fighting, now totals 23.

Other victims of killings attributed to Islamic fundamentalists include three French people, three Russians, three Latin Americans, a Spaniard and a Briton.

Fundamentalists of a radical group known as the Armed Islamic Group issued an ultimatum in a message received on October 31, giving foreigners a month in which to leave the country.

Murders Confirmed

LD1512125393 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] News about the security situation: The security services reported today that 12 Christian foreigners of Croat and Bosnian nationality, who worked at the Hidro-Elektra enterprise, were assassinated yesterday by a terrorist group using knives in the village of Tamezguida, Medea province.

Interior Minister on Safety of Foreigners

LD1412223193 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Selim Saadi, minister of interior and local communities, presided over a meeting in Arzew with Algerians and foreigners who work in the industrial zone. Mr. Saadi informed the foreign technicians of the measures adopted by the Algerian authorities to secure their safety at the local and national level and to enable them to do their work in the best of conditions.

Chief Councillor Killed; 21 'Terrorists' Held

LD1412195293 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Our security services have informed us that they were able to arrest 21 terrorists in various parts of the homeland between 12 and 13 December.

Another communique of the security services said that an armed group killed the chief of the executive delegation [appointed councillors] of Bouira province.

FIS Leader Starts Hunger Strike; Regime Warned

LD1412201693 Tehran IRNA in English 1748 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Athens, Dec. 14, IRNA—A prominent jailed leader of Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) Shaykh 'Ali Belhaj began a hunger strike Sunday in protest against poor prison conditions, the spokesman of FIS in Europe, Rabeh Kabir, said in a statement Tuesday.

Kabir said Belhaj was separated from other imprisoned FIS leaders and isolated in the wing reserved for common criminals and those sentenced to death. Nobody is permitted to visit him.

Another Islamic leader Shaykh Abdel Kader [Chebouti], in solitary confinement for eight months, is being denied contacts by his lawyers and relatives.

The statement warned of "dangerous consequences" and said it would hold the military-backed regime responsible if Belhaj suffered any harm.

Egypt

Musa Meets With U.S. Senate Delegation

NC1312151893 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 13 Dec 93

[Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa met today with a delegation from the U.S. Senate led by Senator Arlen Specter, which is currently visiting Cairo.

Musa said that he and the U.S. delegation discussed developments in the Middle East as well as the outcome of Palestinian-Israeli talks.

Senator Arlen Specter, for his part, said that the talks focused on the outcome of the Palestinian-Israeli talks. The senator said that Musa presented his views concerning the talks and expressed optimism that progress would be made in the next 10 days. The senator expressed hope that President Mubarak will exert efforts to overcome the obstacles facing the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. He added that the Palestinian reaction concerning the need to implement the declaration on time is understandable. The senator stressed the importance of continued dialogue between Yitzhaq Rabin and Yasir 'Arafat.

Columnist on U.S. Claims on Israel's Nuclear Arms

NC1412173693 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 9 Dec 93 p 8

[From the "Close Up" column by Salamah Ahmad Salamah: "Wisner and Israel's Nuclear Arms"]

[Text] The United States is looking for convincing justifications for its unconvincing position for keeping silent about Israel's possession of nuclear weapons. Every time the issue of ridding the Middle East of nuclear arms is raised, whether through Egypt's initiative or within the framework of multilateral talks, the United States fails to take a clear and decisive stance in line with its declared policy of opposing nuclear proliferation worldwide. The latest of these stances was President Clinton's threat to take military action against North Korea because it refuses to allow international inspection of its nuclear program.

As for Israel—which the CIA director recently admitted is the only state in the Middle East that possesses nuclear arms, estimated by certain sources at well over 100 nuclear warheads—Washington turns a blind eye. Washington even sought to dispel the fears and doubts of the Arab countries without offering any guarantees that Israel will not use these weapons in the future. The latest of these unconvincing justifications came in a statement made in Cairo by Frank Wisner, U.S. under secretary of defense for policy, who was also U.S. ambassador to Egypt, during his recent visit to Cairo. He said that Israel alone possesses nuclear weapons in the Middle East because it is vulnerable to dangers from Iraq and Iran, particularly because it is now possible to launch weapons of mass destruction by missiles from remote areas.

Despite suggestions and campaigns by the U.S. media and intelligence services that Iran and Iraq—and sometimes Libya is mentioned—probably have nuclear programs, there is no real evidence that these countries possess nuclear arms. The UN inspection teams have confirmed that the Iraqi nuclear program has been completely destroyed and that Iraq cannot restore it for decades. In addition, the Iranian nuclear program is under the supervision of the International Agency for Atomic Energy, whereas Israel's is not.

What is the goal behind exaggerating the dangers and threats to which Israel is exposed? Clearly U.S. assistance to Israel to retain its nuclear arms contrary to the principles of U.S. policy, which is opposed to nuclear proliferation, is part of that country's policy that gives Israel alone the privilege of military superiority in the region and, consequently, the possibility of using nuclear deterrence against all threats to U.S. interests. Thus there is no need for us to believe Wisner's justifications that entitle Israel to possess nuclear weapons. In this context, any peace agreements on the Palestinian, Jordanian, or Syrian fronts will be incomplete as long as Israel's nuclear weapons are not withdrawn.

Sidqi Delivers Government Policy Statement

NC1312150493 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1025 GMT 13 Dec 93

[Government policy statement delivered by Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi before the People's Assembly in Cairo on 13 December—live]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate, People's Assembly speaker, brothers and sister members of the dignified Assembly, peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you: At the outset of this parliamentary session, allow me to record with the utmost appreciation the fruitful cooperation of your dignified Assembly with the previous government in the various fields of national action during three sessions of the legislative term. We believe you will continue to cooperate with this government. We all share the same responsibility and goal. We hope this session will add tangibly to our democratic march in our dear homeland. The people have given their word and President Mubarak has been reelected for a third term in office in a popular referendum in which huge masses took part motivated by overwhelming patriotic sentiment about the need for participation. These masses came out in great numbers to the referendum committees to convey a message of love and loyalty to the man who led their march for 12 years with the utmost sincerity and integrity. This message clearly demonstrated that the people stand by President Mubarak's program, which emphasizes peace, stability, and development in a democratic society.

Egypt's achievements during the past two terms are obvious, a considerable democratic transformation has been achieved allowing everyone the right to express himself and participate in the democratic process. Egypt has broken the backbone of terrorism and liquidated many of its dens without relinquishing its democratic line or the supremacy of law. Massive efforts have been made resulting in a comprehensive renewal of the infrastructure to accommodate numerous bases of production in the years to come. Drastic amendments have been made to economic, financial, and monetary policies. The banking sector has been developed in line with new standards following international criteria. All these measures have had a great positive impact on investment and production. They have also boosted the proceeds from foreign currencies. There is now an intellectual maturity and large-scale social acceptance of the market economy [words indistinct] so as to be a basic partner in the development process after proving its effectiveness and patriotism manifest in the many industrial, agricultural, and tourism projects established in the new urban societies and elsewhere in Egypt.

Egypt implemented two five-year plans, in which the volume of investment projects reached 171 billion Egyptian pounds. The third five-year plan has started and its investments are estimated at around 154 billion pounds. Egypt's economy achieved an annual growth of 6.2

percent in the first five-year plan and 3.9 percent in the second plan. An annual growth of 5.1 percent is expected in the third five-year plan, God willing.

To be fair, the world's respect for the president convinced it that Egypt was serious about the reform process and settling foreign debts. These have been reduced by 50 percent and returned to the level they were in 1981, despite our foreign currency expenditure on the infrastructure, modernization, and replacement. The president's desire to protect those on low incomes and reduce the burdens of reforms on the poor prompted the gradual implementation of the reform plan.

We have great hopes for this term of office, but hopes alone are not enough to achieve the national objectives; they need to be accompanied by serious action. The president's instructions to the government called for paying particular attention to completing the economic reform process while focusing on increasing production and productivity, protecting the security of the homeland and the citizen, consolidating social justice, paying attention to the conditions of the low-income groups and those living in the popular areas, confronting unemployment, reforming education, focusing on the rate at which the population is increasing, eliminating bureaucracy, and simplifying procedures.

In light of these directives and others set out by the president in his speech when he opened this parliamentary session and within the framework of the Constitution and laws, I am honored to present the government policy statement to you today.

I will discuss the comprehensive reforms in the first part of the statement; democratic application, the supremacy of the law, and social reforms in the second part; and foreign policy in the third.

On comprehensive reforms, I can start by giving some of the signs of the success already achieved, thanks be to God. The government is implementing a comprehensive reform plan that involves the economic, political, social, and organizational aspects. The first phase of this program has been concluded and has resulted in great changes. In the economic field, the reforms aim to turn Egypt's economy into a system that relies on market forces, restore the country's ability to grow without high rates of inflation, allow the public and private business sectors to operate freely alongside each other and in accordance with the rules of competition, and gradually liberalize foreign trade.

Within the framework of these objectives, there were achievements that cannot be belittled. Among them, a general atmosphere of financial stability and economic growth was created, an atmosphere that compensates investors, producers, and exporters and encourages competition and productivity. The price of industrial commodities has been liberalized, apart from a small list of commodities that are still subsidized in favor of the limited-income sectors. The prices of all agricultural crops, apart from cotton and sugar cane, have been liberalized. And a draft law liberalizing the cotton trade and starting the operation of the cotton exchange market will be submitted to your esteemed assembly during this term. To protect farmers' rights, cooperative marketing of cotton will continue for some time on an optional basis. [applause] Farmers will be invited to change the extra long-fiber cottons to long-fiber cottons in the Governorates of al-Buhayrah, Kafr al-Shaykh, and Damietta and in the town of Basyun in al-Gharbiyah Governorate, using new strains. The Ministry of Agriculture is looking at liberalizing the price of sugar cane. [applause] To encourage the cultivation of wheat, the price of 1 ardeb [equivalent to 5.619 U.S. bushels] of wheat has been set at 75 pounds for optional delivery [to cooperatives]. As you know, there is no longer any compulsory delivery. The quantity of wheat scheduled for receipt next year will double, reaching 2 million as opposed to 1 million ardebs this year. A study is under way to lift the ban on the export of barley rice [al-urz al-sha'ir]. These reforms in pricing and marketing policies will make room for investors and producers to increase their products and increase their quality to compete in local and foreign markets.

The government is examining the outstanding debts owed to the Bank of Agricultural Development and Credit and will consider subsidizing serious customers who defaulted on their payment for reasons beyond their control to bring agricultural projects out of the limbo they are in and ensure their continuity. The subsidy will be borne by the general budget.

The government focuses on the taxation system. A unified taxation draft law has been completed and referred to your esteemed assembly. Without exaggeration, this law will achieve justice in taxation, regulate relations between the taxation agencies and the various productive sectors, and encourage investment.

This law is being discussed by a People's Assembly committee. You will all see that the criticism leveled at this law is baseless. The criticism was leveled by members who did not study it carefully. We will discuss this law in the coming days in a free and realistic way, God willing. In addition, the exchange rate of foreign currencies has become standard and realistic, stimulating exports and limited imports and ensuring efficient use of foreign currency. We have seen a noticeably firm Egyptian currency throughout the past three years after continuing declines and fluctuations. The interest rate on Egyptian currency has been liberalized, allowing realistic rates prompting people to save in local currency. This also generated a positive impact on investment, especially after prices dropped due to the market mechanism. Inflation dropped to 11 percent during 1992-1993. It was under 10 percent in July 1992.

The state's general budget has been controlled by developing resources and limiting expenditure. We expect the deficit will, God willing, be reduced to 2.6 percent of the local gross output during 1993-1994, to 1 percent in 1995-1996, and disappear thereafter, God willing. This

represents a real reform, which will result in a considerable reduction in financing government expenditure through the banking sector. The deficit is funded from real savings. The fiscal policy in the next stage aims to reduce reliance on foreign loans in financing the budget's deficit and maintaining the reduction in the foreign debt following the signing of the agreement with the Paris Club in May 1991.

What was a deficit in the balance of transactions abroad has become a surplus for the first time in modern history. This surplus totaled $1.4 billion in 1990-1991, rose to $3.7 billion in 1991-1992, and reached $4.8 billion in 1992-1993.

Foreign dollar reserves in the banking sector rose to U.S. $24 billion at the end of August 1993. This figure includes $14.6 billion held by the Egyptian Central Bank. One of the most important factors improving the balance of payments was the increase in remittances from Egyptians working abroad to $7.3 billion in 1992-93, compared with $3.8 billion in 1990-91. Overall revenue levied on passage through the Suez Canal rose to nearly $2 billion in 1992-93, compared with $1.7 billion in 1990-91. Revenue from tourism in 1992-93 reached $1.8 billion, which is 6.3 percent less than the revenue from the previous year. This was caused by terrorist activities and attacks on tourists. The government is making intensive efforts to contain this crisis and restore prosperity to the tourist sector.

One recent important positive aspect was the settlement of the foreign debt problem, which relieved Egypt of its debts to all the Arab Gulf governments, U.S. military debts, and around 30 percent of [words indistinct] obtain another 20 percent in July 1994, God willing, so that the reduction will fall to 50 percent. This reduction in the burden of foreign debts is necessary for continuing to improve the balance of payments and to allocate a better rate of foreign currency revenues to development, instead of allocating them to servicing the debts.

Egypt will not resort to foreign loans in the coming stage, God willing, except in dire circumstances and only to finance the projects that can pay off their loans and in a way that will not affect the Egyptian economy's ability to service the foreign debts.

These economic reforms were accompanied by many changes in the organizational, legal, and administrative spheres. Starting in 1987, the government began to simplify and amend the legislation in line with the reform policies. The government paid special attention to simplifying litigation procedures out of its conviction that a quick and speedy settlement of disputes is necessary to create the right environment for investment and even for economic and social development in general. Some clauses of the civil litigation law and the criminal procedures law were amended, saving time and money. The amendments also included simplifying the legislation that governs economic activities, the most important of which were those that regulate the start of business activity and the laws on protecting ownership and contractual rights, such as the law on tariffs and documentation in the civil register. The government also completed laws and regulations that regulate the business, financial, and banking system sectors.

The Higher Committee on Legislation Affairs chaired by the justice minister is revising legislation and drawing up new legislation to ensure government policies are implemented. Several bills will be presented to your estimable assembly during its current session, God willing. These include a foreign exchange bill, which will lift all the remaining restrictions on possessing foreign currency and trading in it. The import laws will also be amended to ensure local products are protected from illegitimate competition. A unified investment bill, an antimonopoly bill, a unified labor bill, a bill regulating the functions of mayors and village chiefs, a civil affairs bill, one introducing a unified national number for every citizen, a new trade bill, a new criminal code bill facilitating litigation procedures in criminal issues, and a bill on commercial and international arbitration to bring us up to date with international practices are all in the pipeline.

The bill on commercial and international arbitration has been submitted to the assembly. The competent committee raised some observations that are being considered. The bill will soon be returned, God willing, to the assembly.

Some years ago, the government launched a program to improve public services and simplify all the measures and forms in use. We modernized about 2,700 government offices and established new standards for carrying out public services in 217 departments. A data center affiliated with the Council of Ministers has been set up to support decisionmakers.

Model offices will be set up to receive investment applications. The function of these offices will be to contact the competent ministries and departments on behalf of the investors. The offices will provide incentives to projects with a capital of under 5 million pounds [around $1.7 million]. Such projects will be approved immediately, as long as they are located in new urban areas, industrial zones, and underpopulated areas. To get immediate approval, these projects must be located outside agricultural areas.

These measures are part of the government's comprehensive administrative reform. You may know that it is difficult to improve government services and remove the problems facing investors and other users of government services. Investment, trained personnel, improved legislation, modernized work systems, and competent administrators are needed to perform the administrative reform program. So, administrative reform is staged; it does not come all at once.

This is as far as achievements are concerned. I will now move to the plans concerning the reform program. Egypt stands at the threshold of a new stage of reforms aimed at improving the living conditions of all the Egyptian

people and enhancing the productive capabilities and employment prospects of the poor.

The Egyptian reform program aims to redress structural defects and maintain financial and monetary stability. Building on our past reforms, we will seek to increase investment, complete the liberalization of foreign trade, increase exports, create jobs for youths, and improve the skills of Egyptians through a comprehensive education and health program.

Increasing productivity is a task that requires efficient management, increased investment by the private sector, and more incentives for business. [words indistinct] Regarding the public business sector [state-owned projects undergoing privatization], the government will continue its intensive efforts to reform the management of the public business sector companies, with the following goals in mind.

We must review the performance of losing companies to reform their financial and administrative structures. The public business sector companies should be able to repay their debts, expand their production bases, create new jobs, and produce exportable commodities at competitive prices. These companies should use their idle production capacities, seek alternative modes of finance, expand their productive capabilities, and adopt production methods that will enable them to improve the quality of their products and reduce costs. All these objectives boil down to reforming the management of these companies and enhancing their efficiency. This can be achieved through constant training and floating part of their capital in the form of shares. The clauses of the stock market law allow workers to form unions and to buy some of the companies' shares. Numerous controls are in place to prevent the sale of state-owned projects at less than their real value. Assets of these companies that are offered for sale are to be evaluated by independent local or foreign experts who are known for their integrity and competence. The assets of these companies should not be evaluated by a single party. The company's consultants, the holding company [administrative body running a group of state-owned companies each], and a national bank have to review the evaluation.

If a dispute arises, it will be referred to the general assembly of the holding company, which is chaired by the minister of the public business sector. All these activities define the minimum selling price. When shares are offered for sale by public subscription, this will be done through the stock exchange and at a fair price.

Another goal covers general investments that prepare for the flow of the private sector's investments, specifically the completion of the infrastructure.

Investment opportunities for the private sector can be increased by providing the right climate.

I referred to the (?licensing) of the stock market; this will be done according to the law ratified by the People's Assembly, that is, Law 95 for 1992. I will include all the relevant details in my statement to the assembly, God willing, as soon as I finish it.

Liberalization of foreign trade is the next point. It aims to lift every restriction impeding exports, manage imports in technical ways, gradually reduce the list of banned imports, and protect local production—all these issues concern all of you, which is why I am eager to review them faithfully before the esteemed assembly—from the illegal trade to which some countries resort either through subsidies or enticement. These measures will pave the way for competition between local products and imported, especially as experience has shown that a ban does not help local production in terms of quality or reducing production costs. I already discussed this in great detail before the esteemed Assembly.

Exports started to be liberalized on 30 May 1991. Both the public and private sectors were given equal export opportunities, and the list of commodities—the export of which was restricted and needed the approval of some departments—was canceled. The list of commodities—the export of which was restricted to annual percentages—was also canceled, apart from tanned leather. The list of commodities that could not be exported was canceled, apart from raw lather and scrap metal. The [completion of] forms was made easier in preparation for their elimination in the law that will be submitted to you. Only one measure remains—issuing a customs form for statistical purposes.

A study is under way to amend Law 118, 1975, on imports and exports and the executive list to keep pace with the policies of liberalizing foreign trade and increasing exports.

The government is also considering a law banning monopolies to provide the competitive climate for national production and thus upgrade product quality.

To foster a suitable climate for external marketing, the government has concluded numerous bilateral agreements and joined other multilateral agreements that grant our exports preferential tariff treatment. Trade exchange relations with other Arab countries have been reformulated via new trade agreements that aim to increase the volume of Egyptian exports and the overall trade exchange with these countries.

To maintain our African markets, Egypt joined 50 other African countries in establishing the African Export and Import Bank.

The government is also discussing a bill amending the International Fairs and Markets General Authority Law in a way that will enable it to carry out its important task of exhibiting the country's national products at the fairs in which it chooses to participate and open new markets for a growing volume of exports.

It has also been decided not to resort to quantity restrictions on imports through administrative decisions. Technical methods will be used instead, such as

exchange rates, customs tariffs, and technical restrictions, notably standard specifications. In this context the ban on importing 52 industrial and agricultural commodities was lifted in July 1993. The list of temporarily banned imports now includes only 26 commodities.

The customs tariff structure has been amended, reducing the highest tariff rate. Tariffs on investment commodities has been reduced to encourage investment. The trend toward reducing the number of restricted imports continues.

A new system is being implemented organizing the relationship between the final product and the raw materials going into its manufacture. Customs tariffs on some semimanufactured commodities are being amended in a way that takes into account the degree of their unfinished state. Some other raw materials used in manufacturing other products have been moved into a lower tariff bracket.

The customs tariff amendment will also abolish special exemptions that certain parties used to enjoy when importing certain commodities. Notable among these parties are public business sector companies and government departments. The aim is to give equal treatment to these companies and private sector companies.

To protect domestic products, Egypt is using a realistic exchange rate that shows the real cost of imports. It will also impose appropriate and unexcessive customs tariffs.

Egypt has also formulated a comprehensive system to prevent an intentional glut of imports in a way that would harm domestic products. When this is shown to have happened, a fair price for these imports will be assessed with the help of a technical committee. This price must not be less than in the country of origin, regardless of the price stated on the receipt. [applause]

Brothers, this system has been in force ever since we implemented a free import policy. I assure everyone that we have the ability and resources to prevent any fraud or intentionally created gluts on the market. You must, however, promptly inform us of what the foreign competitor is doing. Submit the necessary documents to us and we will do whatever is necessary. Submit to us the receipts or bills showing that the commodity in question is fraudulently subsidized and we will take the necessary measures.

There are no problems, because the customs authorities have world prices stored on computers. To confront fraud, we apply the same specifications to imports as we apply to local products. This prevents a foreign commodity that does not meet these specifications from entering. I would like to stress that we do not use specifications to deprive someone of his rights or to obstruct legal trade. Egypt is one of the GATT signatories and we are eager to respect this agreement.

Naturally, the first step to eliminate the unemployment problem is to conduct a census of the surplus graduates. This census has been completed in 14 governorates. It is under way in seven others. The census has not covered remote governorates yet. Initial results indicate that there are 1.430 million surplus graduates. In the governorates in which the census has been completed, they are distributed as follows: Some 10 percent hold college degrees, 8 percent hold diplomas above the level of technical school, and 82 percent hold high school diplomas. The government hopes the census in all the governorates will be completed in the next few months.

The government has adopted integrated policies to solve the unemployment problem. These include spreading development throughout the Egyptian governorates, giving youths productive assets, turning to export economy, and increasing foreign investment. All these issues are explained in the statement, which I will leave with the assembly.

I now turn to the issue of raising the standard of education, which is the fourth point in the policy. Achieving people's hopes and prosperity is linked with upgrading education. Education is the first guarantee to possessing the means of science and knowledge and to using them to serve the national economy.

Education is the primary guarantee of possessing science and knowledge and using them to serve the national economy. Therefore, it is natural to make the development of education Egypt's national project during the remaining years of this century. The objectives of this development can be defined as, first, the expansion in the school building program to accommodate all children qualified for basic education; second, the development of the curriculum so that it can satisfy the labor market's needs and keep pace with scientific development; and third, the right training of teachers. This is detailed in the statement.

Another point regarding the future concerns health services. The government is paying great attention to individuals' health by expanding preventive services, including sewage treatment and potable water; providing health care in the countryside and urban centers; providing treatment; eliminating endemic diseases; and combating environmental pollution. All these issues are also detailed in the statement.

We talked in the first part about what has been done in the overall reform process and what we are seeking to achieve in the future. Now we move to political and social stability in the second part. Egypt's development and prosperity depend on political and social stability. It is impossible to achieve any real progress without this stability. One element of this stability is national action in a democratic atmosphere that respects the view and counterview, complies with the supremacy of law, and upholds the state's authority to provide security to the homeland and citizens. Another element is a cultural renaissance that aims to revive the Egyptian citizens' intellectual openness, consolidate values, and refine

behavior. A third element is a social justice that protects the homeland's unity and maintains the process of social integration.

The president has stressed on several occasions that his real interest is to expand the scope of participation in this national action to include everybody. This is the nature of the democratic system that essentially means the people's rule of the people and by the people and that the majority has the right to rule and the minority has a similar right to oppose so that it can become the majority one day. Our situation indicates that the democratic process in Egypt has developed greatly. The door has been opened wide for all the political parties to participate in a partisan life. All the trends are included. The number of legal parties has risen from four in 1981 to 13 today. In the past 10 years we have also witnessed fundamental progress toward press freedom, based on the premise of its important role in criticizing and supervising and on the state's desire that it should be subjected to no authority but the law.

Constitutional establishments are numerous in Egypt. Foremost among them is your distinguished assembly, which achieves popular partnership in making decisions and supervising their sound implementation. This is the real course to uphold popular will.

At the start of his third term in office, the president stressed his firm position that tackling society's problems is achieved through more democracy and not less democracy or going back on it. Our goal is to achieve a democratic system that benefits the homeland and serves its basic aims of stability, development, and progress. These stands clearly indicate that the political leadership adheres to a democratic system of government, which is the only system capable of correcting the course and confronting the dangers.

From the start, democracy has been supported by the judiciary establishment in which thousands of honest Egyptians work. They establish justice among the people and issue their sentences with the power of the law without discrimination among the citizens. The government is interested in supporting this establishment, its independence, and the quick resolution of cases. To deal with the accumulation of cases before the courts, the government intends to increase the number of judges. It has increased the retirement age of judges to 64 years. It has increased the number of court hearings. It has provided material comfort for the judges and their assistants. It has built new court buildings and provided them with the most up-to-date systems for keeping archives. This is being done gradually. Laws and rulings are being published in organized and modern reference books to facilitate their use. The government has also simplified the litigation process to save time and money.

In the upcoming period the need will increase to protect and support stability, which some terrorist groups are trying to undermine. This terrorism, in fact, is not a war against the government or the police but a war against the Egyptian people. Terrorism has dedicated its efforts to sabotaging tourism, which brings revenues from which millions of citizens benefit. Terrorism also threatens the lives of innocent people. The government is confronting this problem in many ways. From the legislative aspect, the government has adopted a new course based on deterrence on the one hand and encouraging repentance on the other. The security authorities have been asked to continue their successful operations which have begun to achieve positive results in containing terrorism. The security authorities are implementing specific orders to search for fugitive terrorist leaders at home and to arrest them and to monitor the activity of fugitive terrorist leaders abroad in coordination with the security authorities of other states. The government has also augmented its security presence in the governorates, especially in Upper Egypt.

The government is seeking, in the coming stage, to involve the largest possible number of people in all issues that concern the homeland, including the confrontation and fight against violence and terrorism. This can be done by strengthening the mainstream rejection of terrorism and encouraging a wider popular awareness of its danger. More extensive efforts must be made by the media and by men of religion to propagate the faith and spread enlightenment and proper religious and cultural awareness to all sectors of the nation.

The government is using all its resources to strengthen domestic peace and the national spirit. The government's efforts in the sphere of achieving security are not limited to combating terrorism but extend to confronting all criminal elements and outlaws. The aim of this is to achieve maximum security. The security agencies are working assiduously to establish a database that includes information about convicts and fugitive criminals. They will also step up their antinarcotics efforts and deal with the manufacture and trade in firearms. These agencies will also remedy the negative conditions in the country's jails.

On this occasion, I wish to address a deserved salute on behalf of the government to the police forces [applause] who are fighting a self-sacrificial battle, losing martyrs to treacherous bullets, in order to defend the people.

As to external security, our aim is to maintain the peace that Egypt has achieved and which restored to it its whole national territory. Without this peace, it would be difficult for us to aspire to economic development and prosperity in Egypt. The way to maintain this peace is to have armed forces that are able to defend the country's territory [applause] and to maintain a high standard of combat capability. Coordination and cooperation between the armed forces and other security forces in the state must be continued.

Egypt should be proud of the distinguished performance of the armed forces, which has risen to international standards. On this occasion, it pleases me to salute every officer and soldier of the sons of our armed forces,

[applause] At the same time, the state realizes the importance of culture in building society and man to be an effective factor in the process of development and progress. Our cultural standing since President Husni Mubarak assumed his first term in office demonstrates that the state is greatly interested in culture and in fostering the intellectuals, who contribute to building society no matter what their ideological or political leanings.

The cultural plan in the next stage aims at achieving the following goals:

1. Ensuring the means of culture for youngsters and freeing them from the pressure of deviant ideas.

2. Nurturing talented and distinguished individuals.

3. Enabling youngsters to have easy access to various world cultures.

Regarding radio and television, the plan aims at ensuring media capable of spreading thoughts and ideas and of contributing to the economic and social development projects and spreading media services to the Egyptian, Arab, and Islamic communities worldwide, commensurate with Egypt's civilization.

The success of reforms in Egypt is linked to the extent the poor classes and low income people can benefit from these reforms. This leads us to raise issues that complement economic reforms intended to achieve social benefits to the broad base of the people. The most important of these issues involves paying sufficient attention to the population problem, rebuilding slum areas, expansion in economic housing, fostering youth, and consolidating social justice. Regarding population growth, we know that the population of Egypt has risen to 59 million, including Egyptians abroad. If the current growth rate continues, the population will rise to 96 million by 2000. In 2013, 20 years from now, the population will reach approximately 93 million [figures as heard]. The problem here lies not only in very high population density, but also in the inability of the Egyptian economy to accommodate and assimilate these huge numbers with a higher standard of living. Therefore, any serious reform program must be based first on a decisive confrontation of the population growth so that the standard of living will not decline. It is no coincidence that the population problem is one of the important issues that President Mubarak raised after he assumed power in 1981 and has continued to raise constantly and tirelessly ever since.

Egyptian towns, especially Cairo and Alexandria, as well as towns in Upper Egypt, are full of slums that lack urban planning and suffer from severe shortages of services and utilities. Disease and crime are rampant in these areas. In accordance with the president's instructions, the government began in April 1993 to implement a quick plan to develop these areas by building infrastructures and providing the necessary services. The plan covered 430 areas in Cairo, Alexandria, al-Qalyubiyah, and Upper Egypt at a cost of 336 million pounds. There are 25 areas that cannot be developed; therefore, they must be demolished and their inhabitants must be moved to new areas.

The flexibility of the third five-year development plan made possible the allocation of 4 billion pounds to develop these slum areas in 11 governorates. Out of the government's concern not to create new slum areas, the urban zones of towns are being defined. Building will not be allowed except in accordance with Law 25 for the year 1992. All measures have been taken to prevent urban advance on agricultural land.

The housing units completed by the public and private sectors from 1982/1983 to 1992/1993 number 2 million units distributed as follows: 16 percent low-cost housing, 46 percent economic housing, 24 percent medium-cost housing, 9 percent above medium-cost housing, and 5 percent good housing. These figures clearly indicate that the housing policy over the past 11 years has been in favor of low-income and medium-income groups. The third five-year development aims at building 1,066,000 housing units.

Legislation is currently being prepared to regulate the relationship between landlords and tenants. The government will issue the law in two phases. The first phase will involve regulating the relationship for the houses built after the law is issued, for unrented housing units, and for non-housing units. The second phase will regulate the relationship of old houses occupied by tenants before the law was issued. This is our plan. We are fully prepared to discuss this subject.

The state is also eager to provide youth with all means to live in their homeland, proud of belonging to it, optimistic about its future, and participating in building and developing it. There are various areas for work with youth, primarily the following:

1. Spreading culture and values to combat extremism.

2. Broadening the national plan for physical fitness and expanding athletic schools and centers.

3. Diversifying the programs for preparing leaders and sending youngsters on scholarships abroad for training and education.

Regarding comprehensive care for children, the state has sought to work out numerous plans such as the reading program for all, according to which thousands of cultural centers for children have been opened, children with heart problems, care for handicapped children, eliminating illiteracy among children and women, and care for children in the new urban communities that housed the families whose homes were destroyed during the October earthquake, the Egyptian Children Decade plan, which President Mubarak decreed. The state is acting to issue a unified draft law for children and mothers. The plan will be referred to you this year, God willing. All these plans are designed to prepare Egyptian children for the 21st century during which we hope to attain all our hopes.

At the same time, the state is concerned with caring for the low income classes and alleviating the burdens of economic liberalization on these classes. The most important achievement in this respect is maintaining free education, particularly basic education. The state seeks to ensure medical treatment to low income people. Medical care insurance now covers 5.1 million people. A complete legislative review is under way to boost health insurance and extend it to new segments of society. Approximately 10 million pupils in 158 cities and 1708 villages have been medically insured. The rest of the pupils will be insured next year, God willing. The remaining approximately 2.5 million pupils will be medically insured next year, God willing.

The soft loans that the state offered for low-cost housing since 1982-1983 and up to now have totalled approximately 11 billion Egyptian pounds. The state's general budget covers the difference between the subsidized interest rate and the real interest rate.

In addition, the state continues to sell certain basic commodities and services at subsidized prices. The general budget covers the difference in prices. The sum allocated for subsidies and reducing the cost of living in the 1993-1994 budget totals 3.641 billion pounds. The state secures social care for civil servants and pensioners. The number of insured people by 30 June 1993 totalled 15.4 million. The gross salaries and compensations disbursed to them during 1992-1993 totalled approximately 4.479 billion pounds. The beneficiaries totalled approximately 6.3 million.

In the past six years, the government has continued to disburse an annual social allowance to civil service employees and pensioners in addition to the periodic allowances. The annual increase rate increased by 20 percent and is above the 11 percent inflation rate. Only last year the inflation rate was 10 percent and the allowance was 10 percent. The government also allowed the establishment of unions for employees and workers of the public business sector companies to buy and sell stocks offered for sale.

I now come to the third and final part—foreign policy.

In foreign policy, the government is exerting massive efforts to take care of Egyptians abroad. Egypt plays a positive and unique role in establishing peace in the Middle East region and its efforts are appreciated. No other country in the region is doing what Egypt is doing. We are proud of this and will continue our efforts in this direction.

Relations with the Arab countries take high priority in Egyptian foreign policy interests. Egypt is working to boost its relations with all the fraternal Arab countries. Egypt's foreign policy interests include every Arab issue, including the efforts to create Arab reconciliation, especially following the Gulf crisis. As for relations with the Arab countries, they are, with one exception, the best they can be, particularly with the Gulf and the Middle East countries.

Egypt is also deeply concerned with Iraq's territorial integrity and with Lebanon's unity and independence. It has unique relations with all the Gulf countries and also with the Middle East countries.

We are also working fully to develop our political and economic relations with the Arab Maghreb countries. Here, there are joint committees to achieve this development.

Egypt and Libya have good relations that are developing positively. Egypt's efforts on the Lockerbie crisis and its bid to find a negotiated solution that rules out any military option and is in accordance with international legitimacy are fully appreciated by Libya. Egypt has been linked with Sudan by unique ties throughout history. In addition to human and cultural ties that bind the two peoples, the Nile River represents the bond that unites the two countries and makes their relationship unique and special. The Egyptian Government and people are looking forward to restoring the two peoples' relations to normal soon, God willing.

Egypt has contributed positively to the ongoing efforts to end the deteriorating situation in Somalia and we have sent troops there as part of the UN force. Egypt also pays special attention to the Arab League and consolidating its agencies, something that the sisterly Arab states fully appreciate. Egypt has adopted and abided by the resolutions and recommendations issued by the Arab League and its institutions to serve the Egyptian causes and interests.

Egypt has always exerted positive efforts in its relations with Africa. These relations witnessed tremendous progress following the recent African summit in July during which President Mubarak was chosen for the second time to be the chairman of the OAU. This reelection is unprecedented. Egypt has been chosen to host the meeting of the executive apparatus tasked to find a mechanism for implementing the African resolutions concerning inter-African conflicts. A minisummit was held a few days ago. Egypt tries to complete Africa's political freedom, achieve economic cooperation among the African states, secure political and security stability in the continent, and participate in the peacekeeping forces and the observation of elections. Egyptian diplomatic efforts have returned three islands held by South Africa to Namibia. Egypt has contributed to the OAU's efforts, as I have already mentioned, to end apartheid in South Africa. Egypt has opened an office there to monitor developments.

Egypt has also taken an interest in the problem of African debt, which obstructs development in the African states. Egypt provides technical assistance to the African states through the Egyptian Fund for Cooperation with Africa, which is affiliated with the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, within the resources and capabilities available. Thanks to Egyptian diplomacy, Egypt now houses the headquarters of the African Bank for Export and Import.

And Egypt's relations with Asia are outstanding. Egypt pays increasing attention to promoting its relations with the Asian states in light of various considerations. Most important of these is Egypt's security and economic interests, which are affected by developments in Asia. This requires us to develop our ties with the countries in that region to learn from their experience and achievements in development, to seek the transfer of technology that suits our circumstances, and to work in other fields.

The era past has seen the Islamic world expanding following the secession of the Islamic states from the former Soviet Union. So, Egyptian foreign policy pays more attention to that issue.

Egypt has also sought assiduously to guide the Islamic Conference Organization [ICO] to become a rostrum that truly reflects the tolerant spirit of Islamic tradition. It has also sought to make the ICO act in solidarity to divert its resources to constructive activities.

Likewise, political relations between Egypt and Europe are based on permanent cooperation and consultations and the exchange of visits. These countries adopt a supportive stance on our economic transformation process by writing off part of our debts, contributing to our social fund, and aiding our program to expand the private property base.

Based on its conviction that Mediterranean security is linked with European security, the Egyptian diplomatic establishment has sought to forge closer ties with the CSCE.

Opening channels of communication with the 12 CIS republics and laying the political and legal foundations for Egypt's relations with them form one of the most significant Egyptian foreign policy achievements of the past year. Some 22 political, economic, trade, scientific, cultural, and technical protocols were signed during visits to Cairo by the presidents of three CIS republics, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. Egypt also exchanged full diplomatic representation with several of these former Soviet republics.

Relations with the United States have continued to grow. Numerous meetings were held and visits exchanged on the highest levels to strengthen the political, economic, military, and technical fields based on mutual respect and trust.

In its contacts with the United States, Egypt seeks to maintain the U.S. economic and military aid to Egypt on the same level as previous years until our economic reform program is completed.

Egypt also plays a major role in the context of the Nonaligned Movement, as you can see, and attempts to establish special relations with the Latin American countries.

The foreign minister returned yesterday after attending the G-15 conference in India.

In addition to maintaining political and economic ties with various countries, Egypt seeks to strengthen these relations by strengthening cultural ties with all of them. Perhaps the brothers in the audience remember the president's speech to the UNESCO meeting. Egypt is seen as a link among the various civilizations and can highlight their chief values. Its role in this respect is well known. There is no greater proof of this than the rare accolade given to President Muhammad Husni Mubarak by UNESCO in recognition of his worldwide role; at the time, the president made a landmark speech drawing a link between Islam's values and origins and those of other religions and civilizations.

Egypt also plays a major and conspicuous role at the United Nations. It has spared no effort to participate in peacekeeping missions in Africa in general and in Somalia in particular. It has sent military and civilian observers to Namibia, Angola, the Western Sahara, and Mozambique. It also participated in the UN peacekeeping forces in the former Yugoslavia and in supervising the Cambodian election. It now plans to send another group to supervise South Africa's election in April 1994, God willing.

In its international relations, reference should be made to three issues. First, the government is trying to retrieve compensation due to Egyptian nationals because of the Gulf war, including payments to various companies and groups. This is the first issue. We will not neglect it. The second issue has to do with human rights. Egypt has made remarkable efforts through its contacts with human rights organizations. It conducts a continuing, constructive dialogue with all concerned parties and organizations. The third issue is this: Egypt's efforts were last month crowned by its election to the membership of the executive councils of four major international organizations: the UN Economic and Social Council, UNESCO, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, and the International Emigration Organization [as heard]. These are the most prominent issues I wished to mention.

As I conclude this statement, I would like to say that over the past two five-year plans we have laid down the foundations of development in all fields. We rebuilt the infrastructure and restructured the production bases, through renovation, replacement, retraining, and expansion. We have achieved a remarkable degree of self-sufficiency, turned the deficit in our balance of payments to surplus, and brought the budget deficit to its lowest levels in years. We have also taken serious steps toward liberalizing the Egyptian economy and opening it to the outside world.

On this occasion, I would like to assure you that the notion that a market economy weakens the role of the state is an erroneous one. The truth of the matter is that a market economy only works in a strong state, one that is capable of drawing up general economic policies to serve the public interests.

As we launch the third five-year plan, I see that the climate is ready for further growth in agriculture,

industry, and exports. We will continue our drive to raise the standards of living in the country, expand the network of social security, and encourage urban settlement outside the overpopulated Nile valley.

Egypt still faces major problems to which it has to find appropriate solutions. These problems exist particularly in the following areas: overpopulation, unemployment, education, health, and economy. The success of our reform program depends on its ability to resolve these problems.

It is hard to achieve a sound remedy for these problems in the absence of a nationwide dialogue that would give expression to the views of the majority and achieve balance among the interests of the various sectors of our society.

Speaking at the opening of the new parliamentary session, His Excellency President Husni Mubarak called on various national forces to engage in wide-ranging dialogue concerning the priorities of national policy, with the aim of formulating a comprehensive program for Egypt to follow in the 21 century.

In response to the president's call, the government is willing to cooperate with your venerable assembly, with those from the opposition parties and those independent deputies who wish to cooperate with us, and with all other democratic forces in the country in formulating a national program that reflects the thinking of the nation and devises appropriate policies in the areas of population, education, health, economy, administration, and social justice.

Finally, I would like to point out that this statement is only a continuation of the previous policy statements made by the government, all of which represent a unified and integrated pattern of thinking. I hope that you take this into consideration in your assessment of this statement, whether in the committee that will respond to this statement or at the general debate on this statement by the members of your venerable assembly. I attach to this statement an appendix concerning the government's achievements in the year 1992/93 and another about the government's projects that will be implemented, God willing, in the year 1993/94. May God guide our steps in serving the interests of Egypt, and say: Work righteousness: Soon will God observe your work, and His apostle, and the believers. [Koranic verse] Peace be upon you. [applause]

Al-Alfi on 'Scheme' To Penetrate State Agencies

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[Text] Cairo, 14 Dec (MENA)—Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi has stated that the security agencies have foiled dozens of planned terrorist operations and that these successes will be announced later. In a statement at a popular committee seminar on confronting terrorism and the possibility of charting a new strategy to confront it, he said that all segments of the population should be vigilant to this danger, because there is a carefully prepared plan to strike at development and the economy in Egypt in favor of other parties.

Al-Alfi said Egypt is not Iran and we will not have another Khomeyni. He said that all Egyptians should take part in striking at this faction boldly and courageously. He noted that there is a comprehensive scheme to penetrate all the state establishments and agencies, that there is constant funding and recruiting from inside and outside Egypt, and that there are people who help terrorists from inside Egypt. Regrettably, he said, some media help these groups by calling them "fundamentalist or religious," although they have nothing to do with religion or fundamentalism, because what they do contradicts the teachings of religion.

Al-Alfi pointed out that these groups are well organized and have a large presence in all establishments and unions. The state organs that represent the majority must play a balanced role and keep a massive presence to confront these groupings, which exist in various departments but ultimately target "all Egypt." These groups are fighting each other for leadership. We have serious confessions by many members who said they were misled.

Al-Alfi praised the people's role in confronting terrorism, especially in the recent operations conducted with the help of the people. He stressed his deep interest in improving the relationship and solidarity between the police and the people. He pointed out that a training strategy and modern equipment are being prepared at police colleges. Efforts are being exerted and contacts made with most countries to modernize the training programs, he said, noting that the improvements have recently begun to bear fruit.

Al-Alfi stressed that there is a need for full awareness inside every state institution, because there are plans to strike them from within in the next few years. He noted that this movement continues its activity and spreads in the name of religion, although it has nothing to do with religion. We are all responsible for safeguarding Egypt and its future.

Bosnia's Ganic Meets Arab League Chief

NC1412141693 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1125 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 14 Dec (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid and Bosnian Vice President Ejup Ganic discussed in a meeting today how the Arab League can support efforts to achieve a just peaceful settlement of the crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Ganic said he explained to Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid the suffering of Bosnia as a result to the Serbian aggression. He said 300,000 people have been killed in this aggression and many others have been victims of other crimes.

He said the Serbs are seeking to destroy the whole country, and the international climate is allowing it to happen.

He ?said the Serbs want to pressure Bosnia's population to squeeze into a small area in the hope of eliminating them later.

We will not allow this; we will resist it, he said. He stressed that the issues do not concern Bosnia alone, but the entire Islamic world.

Ganic said Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid told him he would place the question of Bosnia on top of the Arab League's list of priorities, and that the issue will always be on the Arab League agenda. 'Abd-al-Majid also said that the Arab League will apply diplomatic pressure to end the aggression.

Asked about the presence of Arab volunteers fighting in Bosnia, Ganic said: We need weapons, not men. He criticized the UN resolutions banning the arming of Bosnia.

Ganic praised the hospitality accorded to him during his visit to Egypt.

Bosnian Vice President Departs

NC1512085093 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0740 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 15 Dec (MENA)—Bosnian Vice President Ejup Ganic left Cairo this morning following a 2-day visit to Egypt during which he was received by President Husni Mubarak, Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, and a number of officials.

During his visit, Ganic explained the living conditions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and his country's need for financial and moral support by all the Islamic countries. He emphasized the importance of obtaining weapons to defend his country.

The Bosnian official was seen off at the airport by Awqaf Minister Dr. Muhammad 'Ali Mahjub.

Morocco

Ministry Denies Plan for Ties With Israel

LD1512111093 Rabat MAP in Arabic 0930 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] Rabat, 15 Dec (MAP)—Some mass media reported news to the effect that Morocco had decided "to expand its dealings with Israel"; therefore, "a series of agreements would be signed soon as an important first step on the way to normalizing relations between them."

The Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation pointed out in this regard that the issue of relations between the Arab countries and Israel is the subject of a clear collective decision by the Arab League; therefore, any potential change in the position toward Israel can only be achieved within this framework.

Sudan

Former Army Chief Views Alleged Coup Trial

AB1412224093 London BBC World Service in English 1515 GMT 14 Dec 93

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[Text] Twenty-nine people are to go on trial on Sunday [19 December] in Sudan in connection with an alleged plot to overthrow the government of General Al-Bashir. The accused include several former senior Army officers, including the ex-commander in chief of the Armed Forces, and some of them could face the death penalty. The Sudanese authorities announced at the time in April that plotters were planning to invade the country from Egypt to blow up strategic installations and to assassinate the president. But most of the defendants have fled the country and will be tried in absentia, including General Abd-al-Rahman Sayid, a former army chief of staff. On the line to Cairo, Herba Saleh asked him if he'd be going back to defend himself.

[Begin recording] [Sayid] No, I'm not going to be there. I decided not to go.

[Saleh] But why not? They are promising a public trial and every opportunity for you and the other defendants to plead your case.

[Sayid] You know, nobody trusts those people because there are so many reasons for that. There is the charges are fabricated and there is nothing in common between the accused persons.

[Saleh] You say the charges are fabricated. Do you mean there was no plot at all?

[Sayid] There was no plot at all, I assure you.

[Saleh] What about the people who were picked up in Sudan, the 12 people who the government says there's evidence that they were trying to blow up installations?

[Sayid] Those people, we know some of them. I myself know some of them and we did not really sit down with them and plot. And I don't see that they have [word indistinct] in by themselves. But they were sometimes in Cairo. They met us either on personal or as friends but not for plotting or making any plans. [sentence as heard]

[Saleh] So, if there had been a plot, would you have supported it?

[Sayid] If there was a plot, it would be very clear. That is, I'm a general, I spent about 13 years in the Army. I can't plot such a thing to attack Khartoum to with helicopters, demolish bridges, be using pistols and helicopters. It is very funny really.

[Saleh] So, is it that you are not in favor of overthrowing the government in Khartoum or is it just that you think that that particular plot was unworkable?

[Sayid] I stated clearly from the first time I left Sudan I am going to topple the regime. And I am plotting to topple the regime but I'll not step forward unless I am 100 percent sure that I will succeed.

[Saleh] So, what are you doing to topple the regime?

[Sayid] This is a long story, my friend. You know, we are in the National Democratic Alliance are politicians and soldiers. We are putting our heads all together so that we topple the regime. [end recording]

Al-Bashir on Countering 'Forces of Arrogance'

EA1512112593 Omdurman National Unity Radio in Arabic 1315 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, president of the Republic, has said that the government has evolved a comprehensive national plan to prepare the Sudanese people to counter the plan and conspiracies of the forces of arrogance and imperialism. In an interview with the Iraqi AL-JUMHURIYAH newspaper, his excellency referred to the pressures being brought to bear on Sudan by the forces of arrogance to make Sudan bow in submission. Lt. Gen. al-Bashir praised the Iraqi people's achievements in repairing what had been destroyed in the war and said that what Sudan, Iraq, and Libya are facing could be brought to bear on any other country because the implementation of the imperialist plans is going ahead.

Al-Bashir on 'Foreign Interference'

EA1512111693 Omdurman National Unity Radio in Arabic 1315 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, president of the Republic, has said that the national salvation revolution was launched to secure the unity of Sudan. He said during an interview with AL-SHAMS, which is published in Beirut, that multipartyism and the one-party system have failed in Sudan. He stressed that the current system in Sudan suited Sudanese society. The president of the Republic said there was room for dialogue with the opposition as individuals but not as parties. His excellency confirmed the government's refusal to negotiate with the remnants of the parties. He said some former party men had been appointed to important ministerial posts, having been recruited to work with the revolution.

Lt. Gen. al-Bashir gave an account of the West's colonialist policies and the West's attempts to divide Africa ever since Britain's attempt to establish closed areas in southern Sudan—the Blue Nile and the Nubah Mountains—and to effect the subsequent evictions of ethnic Arabs. Lt. Gen. 'Umar al-Bashir said Sudanese insistence on a united north and south at the 1947 Juba conference had taken British colonialism aback. His excellency stated that the West was persisting in its efforts to separate the south from the rest of Sudan. He said it was foreign interference that had prevented the achievement of peace. His excellency the president stressed that the revolution was trying to achieve peace, saying he hoped the rebel leaders would understand the current conditions in the homeland and make efforts to achieve peace.

Al-Bashir Addresses, Praises Security Forces

EA1412163193 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 4 Dec 93

[Text] Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, the president of the Republic, this morning at Friendship Hall addressed the opening session of police commanders. He praised the performance of the police and their role in maintaining security and stability in the country, which had resulted in reduced crime. His excellency also praised the role of the unified police in restoring security in the south of the country and in the areas of Darfur State plagued by armed robbery. He praised them for standing shoulder to shoulder in a single trench with the Armed Forces and the Popular Defense Forces in the operational and border areas.

Lt. Gen. al-Bashir praised the men of the emergency police and prisons service, stressing that the latter had transformed the prisons into centers of guidance whose inmates emerged as proponents of the universal appeal in various parts of the country. He went on to say that the national salvation revolution had paid the police forces a great deal of attention, having realized how they had deteriorated under the former regimes, stressing that the revolution had laid down a comprehensive program in its national strategy to train and qualify the members of the police forces to enable them to perform their roles in the building of the Islamic nation and bringing about comprehensive development.

He referred to the issuance of the public discipline law and the formation of the popular police in the context of providing support for the unified police. Lt. Gen. al-Bashir stated that instructions had been issued that an economic foundation be established for the police to provide support for all police workers and reduce the burdens shouldered by them. The president of the Republic expressed the hope that the conference would make recommendations and adopt resolutions useful in regard to police work and which would also serve to raise its level of performance.

TNA Head Denies Southern Conflict Religious

EA1412195093 Omdurman National Unity Radio in Arabic 1315 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Mr. Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah, chairman of the Transitional National Assembly, has met His Excellency the Dutch charge d'affaires in Khartoum. Mr. Khalifah lauded the relations between Sudan and the Netherlands and said Sudan welcomed investment in Sudan and was broadening the areas for it.

Mr. Khalifah stressed that the Sudanese people were not religiously fanatical, noting that rebel John Garang's assertions that the problem of the south was of a religious nature were incorrect as the problem of the south was the result of political considerations without any religious dimension whatsoever.

Kuwait

Minister Confirms Digging of Trench Continues

PM1412155293 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 13 Dec 93 p5

[Husayn 'Abd-al-Rahman report: "State Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Dakhil Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Kuwait Continuing To Dig Border Trench"]

[Text] Kuwait—Kuwaiti Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Dakhil has confirmed that Kuwait is continuing its trench-digging operations on its borders with Iraq, adding that the security situation on the borders is now calm after the recent Iraqi violations.

In reply to a question by AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, al-Dakhil yesterday denied the existence of any differences regarding the arrival of the remaining members of the Bengali force operating within UNIKOM in Kuwait. He said that the claims that Bangladesh had requested that its officers and soldiers deployed on the Kuwaiti-Iraqi borders be given the same treatment as Kuwaiti officers and soldiers were unfounded. He noted that this issue was not even discussed by the Kuwaiti Government.

He stressed that the remaining members of the Bengali force will arrive within the next few weeks, and that they consist of 620 infantry officers and soldiers.

Al-Dakhil said that Kuwait is committed to pay its full share of the financial allocations made for the peacekeeping operations under Security Council and UN resolutions.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti security sources told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday that incidents of Iraqi infiltration of Kuwaiti territory noticeably declined last month.

They added that some of those arrested emphasized that they had entered Kuwaiti territory in search of work and to evade military service in the Iraqi Army.

The sources added that these people covered the distance from al-Basrah to Kuwaiti territory on foot and did so only at night and hid in the desert in the daytime.

Qatar

Mirage-2000, Leclerc Sale to Qatar Reported Near

94P50057A

[Editorial Report] London AL-HAYAH in Arabic on 7 December 1993 on page 7 carries a report from London by its military editor on the ongoing arms negotiations between France and Qatar.

It cites unnamed "semi-official" French defense sources as stating that the negotiations "are nearing success." They express hope that an agreement on these arms will be concluded "in a matter of weeks." The sources said that Qatar is interested in modernizing its armor and airforce, and that the new French equipment is needed to take the place of current Qatari French-manufactured arms.

The French sources claim a deal is near with Qatar including 140 Leclerc tanks, with a value of 6 billion French francs (close to $1 billion). They say that Qatar's choice of French tanks has become "almost certain," and that the negotiations are now centering on "the financial and procedural details to conclude the deal officially in a short time."

The sources say the two sides—concerning a squadron of 14 Mirage F-1's that Qatar wants to replace—are also reaching "a preliminary agreement" consisting of 12 Mirage-2000 fighters of an enhanced type called the Mirage 2000-5, at a value of 3 billion French francs (about $500,000). The Dassault Corporation will take the old Qatari fighters and retire them from service after the new ones are delivered to Qatar.

Yemen

Vice President Said Planning Return To Sanaa

JN1512103193 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1015 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Excerpt] Sanaa, 15 Dec (INA)—Yemeni Vice President 'Ali Salim al-Bid has announced that he plans to go back to Sanaa to reassume his constitutional duties.

In press statements published here today, al-Bid said: We will respond to our national responsibilities that require us to be in Sanaa. He added: "We know our way to Sanaa, to which we voluntarily went in the past."

Al-Bid stressed that the Yemeni Socialist Party adheres to the option of unity and is willing to resist attempts at fragmentation and disunity. [passage omitted]

Basindwah Denies Salih, al-Bid To Meet in Jordan

PM1512114893 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 14 Dec 93 pp 1, 4

[Hamud Munsir and Ya'qub al-Zuhayr report: "Yemeni Foreign Minister Denies That Salih and al-Bid Are To Meet In Jordan; Tribe Chief Claims Responsibility for SAWT AL-'UMMAL Incident"]

[Excerpt] Sanaa, Doha—Yemeni Foreign Minister Muhammad Salim Basindwah has denied that there is any intention to hold a meeting in Amman between President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and his deputy 'Ali Salim

al-Bid. He stressed that any agreement between the two parties will be in Sanaa.

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT during his visit to Doha, Basindwah said: We appreciate the endeavors made by King Husayn of Jordan and his interest in the Yemeni crisis. If President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih is going to visit Jordan, it will be at an official invitation.

In a surprising development in relation to the shooting incident at the offices of the Yemeni unionist newspaper SAWT AL-'UMMAL, a tribal chief has claimed responsibility for the incident.

Shaykh Salih Bin-Sawdah Tumay'an, a leader of the Bani Jabr tribe in Ma'rib Governorate, phoned the weekly newspaper AL-SHURA, claiming responsibility for the incident and saying that he had informed the interior minister of this. [passage omitted]

Former German Minister of State Meets Leaders

Tariq 'Aziz Receives Wischeunsky

JN1412193593 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz today received Hans-Jurgen Wischeunsky, former German minister of state and minister of cooperation, who is currently visiting Iraq. The meeting was attended by the Foreign Ministry under secretary and Mr. (Parsons), head of the German Foreign Ministry's Middle Eastern Department.

Saddam Orders Release of Prisoner

JN1412192193 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn today received Hans-Jurgen Wischeusky, former German minister of state and minister of cooperation, who handed him a letter from German Chancellor Helmut Kohl appealing to the leader president to pardon imprisoned German citizen Kai Sondermann, who was imprisoned for entering Iraq illegally.

The leader president ordered the release of the said prisoner.

The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf and Mr. (Parsons), head of the German Foreign Ministry's Middle Eastern Department, who is accompanying the German envoy to Iraq.

Health Minister Meets French Parliamentarians

JN1412181993 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1620 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Baghdad, 14 Dec (INA)—Health Minister Umid Midhat Mubarak today received Rosaline Bashilot [name as received], chairperson of the parliamentary group for friendship between Iraq and France and member of the French National Assembly for the Rally for the Republic, and the delegation accompanying her.

During the meeting, the minister reviewed the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the acute shortage of food and medicine following the unjust blockade imposed on it.

The delegation expressed readiness to convey information on the suffering of the Iraqi people to the French public and to expose the evil plans of the Western circles against Iraq.

Released Frenchman, Delegation Depart

JN1512143293 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1345 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] Baghdad, 15 Dec (INA)—Mrs. Rosaline Bashilot [name as received], chairperson of the parliamentary group for friendship between Iraq and France and member of the French National Assembly for the Rally for the Republic, and the delegation accompanying her left Baghdad today after a visit of several days to Iraq.

During the visit, Mrs. Bashilot held talks with several officials on bilateral ties and means of enhancing them, as well as issues of common interest.

The delegation is being accompanied by Jean Luc Barriere, the Frenchman pardoned by His Excellency President Saddam Husayn yesterday.

AFP: Last Western Prisoners Head for Home

NC1512112493 Paris AFP in English 1035 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text]Baghdad, Dec 15 AFP—The last two Westerners jailed for illegal entry into Iraq left for home on Wednesday [14 December] after being pardoned by President Saddam Husayn, correspondents reported.

Frenchman Jean-Luc Barriere and German Kai Sondermann left their Baghdad hotel for Jordan accompanied by delegations who had come to win their release.

Saddam on Tuesday pardoned the two, serving eight years for illegally entering the country across the disputed border with Kuwait earlier this year, for "humanitarian" reasons.

Iraq released three Britons last week, but seven Asians are still serving jail terms for illegal entry.

A Jordanian military helicopter was to fly Barriere and Sondermann from the border to Amman, where they would catch flights for home.

Flights to and from Iraq are banned under the sanctions imposed since the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Baghdad is seeking to ease its international isolation and argues that it has met the U.N. conditions after the 1991 Gulf war for a lifting of the embargo.

Army on Alert in al-Basrah After Agents' Deaths

LD1512144493 Tehran IRNA in English 1406 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., Dec. 15, IRNA—The Iraqi popular forces killed two Ba'th security agents, 'Abdallah Najm 'Abdallah and Habib Morteza, in the southern city of al-Basrah, where the Army has been put on state of alert, an opposition source said here Wednesday [15 December]. The opposition forces have also exploded an oil pipeline and a power plant in al-Basrah, the source added.

Meanwhile a unit of the Republican Guard was dispatched to Nasiriya last week to reinforce the Army deployed around the city, the source added.

He described the situation in southern Iraq as chaotic and added that a large number of people in Nasiriya,

al-Basrah and Amarah have been rounded up in the past few days and many have been executed for their opposition to the Iraqi regime.

Execution, Dismissal for Coup Role Reported

NC1412160093 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Rumors among citizens in Baghdad say that tyrant Saddam recently executed Staff Major General Salim, director of the Military Aviation Department. He also dismissed Faysal al-Yasiri, director of Baghdad radio and television. Our sources reporting this news said citizens are discussing the execution of Major General Salim and the dismissal of Faysal al-Yasiri. They say the measures were taken because the two were involved in the recent coup attempt the target of which was the head of the regime and his clique. Our sources did not confirm these reports, but they did confirm that the regime's special forces are carrying out a large-scale detention and elimination campaign that includes scores of ranking officers and party officials in Baghdad.

Action Said Taken Against Dissident Officers

PM1412165193 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 14 Dec 93 p 5

[Unattributed report: "After Distribution of Antiregime Leaflets in Army Camps, Reports of Dismissal of Group of Iraqi Officers"]

[Excerpts] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—A well-informed Iraqi source has revealed that more than 250 officers will be retired before 6 January 1994, the anniversary of the Iraqi Army's establishment. The source said that this date is usually associated with promoting officers to higher ranks, but this time it is going to witness a large-scale demobilization of officers, including six major generals (two of them are medical corps officers) and 100 brigadiers. As for the others, they will be offered other ranks.

Two hundred officers have been arrested since July on charges of participating in hatching a coup attempt against President Saddam Husayn. It was reported that they included a number of pilots from Mosul and that among the first to be arrested were a former deputy chief of staff, the former assistant Air Force commander, and an assistant to the military intelligence chief.

The source revealed that antiregime leaflets have been distributed on a large scale since September in Army camps in Mosul and Karkuk—which led to many changes among officers and commanders. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile it has been difficult to stage a number of Iraqi cultural activities in the Italian capital, Rome, because the Iraqi authorities have prevented the head of the Iraqi cultural delegation from leaving Baghdad. Iraqi diplomats have said that Naji al-Hadithi, under secretary at the Culture and Information Ministry, who was entrusted with leading the delegation, was prevented from traveling at the last moment. He was supposed to visit Rome in the first week of December.

The diplomats attribute the decision not to allow al-Hadithi to travel to a previous decision freezing Nuri Faysal Shahir al-Hadithi's membership of the Ba'th Party Regional Command and placing him under house arrest because of what he had allegedly done, namely disobeyed the president's orders and established suspect links with some officers, in addition to disagreeing with 'Udayy Saddam Husayn. [passage omitted]

Regime Said Abducting, Killing Citizens in Karkuk

NC1412182493 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1700 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] According to a news source in Karkuk, the regime has been abducting citizens, killing them, and dumping their bodies in various areas of the city. Citizen Mulla Muhyi-al-Din, a resident of Shurijah, was killed and his body was left lying in a street. On the night of 11-12 December, two citizens were killed. One of them was called Mulla Hakim, a resident of (Rahimawa).

The source added that the groups that are carrying out these murders are using land rovers and (Krona) vehicles. They summon the citizens, kidnap them, and then kill them.

'Bloody Confrontations' in Kurdistan Reported

JN1512090693 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0735 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] Baghdad, 15 Dec (INA)—AL-'IRAQ newspaper has revealed that al-Sulaymaniyah city in the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan has been witnessing bloody confrontations at the hands of the sabotage cliques. The confrontations continued until yesterday evening.

In a report today, the newspaper notes the prevailing chaos, killing, and exchange of fire in the city was between the so-called Kurdish Socialist Party, led by Muhammad al-Haruni, and the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, led by Mas'ud Barzani.

The paper says confrontations occurred when elements of Muhammad al-Haruni's group attacked and occupied a facility owned by Barzani's group. Barzani ordered his cliques to besiege al-Sulaymaniyah and open fire indiscriminately. This resulted in mass killing, without any attention to men, women and innocent bystanders.

The paper notes that other parties in the region stood by watching the massacres, since the outcome of these conflicts and confrontations is in their interest. Those include the communists, Jalal Talabani's group, and others.

The paper adds that the attitude of the so-called fronts, alliances, and parties toward these actions confirms that those people came to the Kurdistan region to carry out a U.S. scheme to oppress and kill the sons of our Kurdish people.

Iranian Bid To 'Destabilize the Region' Seen

NC1512132293 Paris AFP in English 1230 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] Irbil, Iraq (Dec 15)—Rival Kurdish groups have clashed in towns of northern Iraq, killing at least three people, Kurdish officials said here Wednesday [15 December].

They said heavy weapons, including cannons, were used in the fighting which erupted last Friday between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and a pro-Iranian wing of the Socialist Party headed by Hama Haji Mahmud.

The clashes late Tuesday, they said [sentence as received]. At least three people were killed and several injured.

A spokesman for the Kurdish administration, which runs northern Iraq in defiance of Baghdad, accused Haji Mahmud's forces of starting the violence as part of an "Iranian attempt to destabilize the region."

The two groups clashed in al-Sulaymaniyah and other towns close to the Iranian border, as well as in Irbil, where the Kurdish administration has its capital.

The Socialist Party has joined the ranks of the KDP, which controls northern Iraq along with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, but Haji Mahmud decided to hang onto the party's name.

Sources: Regime Planning 'Military Action'

NC1412155993 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Our sources inside Iraq reported an item of news in which they confirmed that the tyrant's forces and the Republican Guard last month carried out a large-scale maneuver with live ammunition in the mountainous area of Jabal Hamrin, which lies in the Governorates of Salah al-Din and Mosul in northern Iraq. The sources said the maneuver took place under the command of [name indistinct] Harrawi, the regime forces' chief of staff, and commanders of the Republican Guard. Hundreds of modern tanks took part in the maneuver along with artillery and missile battalions. Our sources added that the objective of the combat exercises was to raise the offensive potential of the regime's forces and to train in fighting in mountainous regions. Our sources also noted that the number and quality of the participating forces indicate for certain that the tyrant's regime intends to carry out some kind of military action.

Resistance Said Behind Blast at Regime Center

NC1412161993 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] An announcement was made the day before yesterday [12 December] about an explosion in a booby-trapped car at a regime institution. The explosion killed three of the regime's men, injured others, and extensively damaged institution property. The day before yesterday, the government's official spokesman accused foreign countries of being behind the explosion.

Our sources said the explosion took place at an important wing of a security center and was carried out by a group of heroes from the popular resistance who have intensified their operations inside the capital Baghdad out of their desire for revenge against the tyrant and his criminal clique.

'Ferocious Campaign' Against Iraqi Writers Scored

PM1412172593 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 14 Dec 93 p 5

[Unattributed report: "Dismissal of Chief Editor of Iraqi Newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH Condemned"]

[Text] Ankara, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—The Association for the Defense of Writers' and Journalists' Freedoms in Iraq has condemned what it terms a "ferocious campaign against Iraqi writers and authors."

In a new statement issued in Turkey the association said that 'Udayy, the Iraqi president's eldest son, had decided to dismiss the Iraqi writer Sa'd al-Bazzaz, chief editor of the newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH and deputy dean of the journalist corps, from the [journalists'] union on the pretext of "his disloyalty to President Saddam Husayn" following press and radio statements made by al-Bazzaz on political and intellectual issues.

The association revealed: that the poet Wisam Hashim had been detained for a week on the orders of the dean of the journalist corps, during which time he was tortured and abused; that the critic and journalist Sami Muhammad was also arrested and questioned about his responsibility for televising some films—he was released after being beaten and abused; and that television journalist Majid 'Abd-al-Haqq was also arrested and tortured for a month for disciplinary purposes, following which he was returned to work at the youth television station.

The association denounced the dismissal of Zayd al-Hilli from the council of the journalists' union without any legal justification.

In its statement the association appealed to Arab and international intellectual institutions and organizations to defend the writer 'Aziz al-Sayyid Jasim and the journalist Dirgham Hashim, who have been in detention since April 1991 and about whose fate there is no corroborated information. The association demanded the release of the popular poet Falih Hasnun al-Daraji, who was arrested in February 1992.

Peres Optimistic Obstacles Will Be Overcome

BR1512112293 Rome LA REPUBBLICA in Italian 15 Dec 93 p13

[Interview with Foreign Minister Shi'mon Peres by Alberto Stabile in Jerusalem; date not given: "Peres Accuses 'Arafat: 'Autonomy, Yes; State, No'"]

[Text] Jerusalem—"The Palestinians will try to extrapolate a state from the Oslo accord, whereas the agreement reached was on autonomy." If the negotiations are in a state of crisis, it is because "the PLO has exceeded the parameters of the accord on two essential points—controls at border crossings and the extension of the Jericho area due to come under the autonomous administration."

In his office lined with books and mementoes, in sharp contrast with the cold, military-style architecture of the Foreign Ministry, Shi'mon Peres reviewed the causes of the crisis with the Palestinians—a "serious crisis," as he called it.

It is less than four months since the Oslo agreements were signed. But autonomy seems remote. As he points out in his latest book, "The New Middle East," Peres celebrated his 70th birthday that day, 20 August. When it was the turn of Abu-al-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'] to sign the document ratifying peace between Israel and the PLO, 'Arafat's envoy paused a moment, with pen poised: "Minister," he said, "this is your birthday present." Now that atmosphere has disappeared.

[Stabile] Minister, the agreement between Israel and the PLO has failed on its first point. The start of the Israeli withdrawal was due to start 13 December, but a 10-day postponement has been decided. That is a bad start.

[Peres] I would not call it a failure. After Washington we agreed to start within two months. Now one of the two sides needs more time. But it is not a failure; it is a problem. The important thing is to remain consistent with the Declaration of Principles and not to resume the negotiations from scratch.

[Stabile] What are the real reasons for the crisis?

[Peres] Basically, a departure from the parameters of the agreement on two main issues: One is the extension of the Jericho area subject to autonomy; the other is controls at the border crossings with Egypt and the West Bank. The declaration of principles establishes very clear guidelines in this regard.

[Stabile] But you do not think that the Palestinians have backtracked from the agreement?

[Peres] The Palestinians are trying to grab more than is contained in the accords. The accords state that they will lead to autonomy, not a state. There is a big difference, because autonomy does not entail control of external security or the need for foreign relations.

[Stabile] But do you not think that at the end of the transition stage there will be a Palestinian state?

[Peres] We have a better solution than a Palestinian state, and that is a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation or federation. This solution is valid both for the West Bank, the majority of whose population are Palestinian, and for the Palestinians, most of whom hold Jordanian passports.

[Stabile] It remains to be seen whether 'Arafat will agree to this.

[Peres] We certainly cannot force him. This is my opinion. But I would point out that 'Arafat has said that he is in favor of a confederation.

[Stabile] To return to the border problem, 'Arafat said that he is willing to cooperate with Israel. Is Israel also willing?

[Peres] The accord speaks in terms of coordination. Now, if they want to participate in border controls, very well. But Israel remains responsible for external security. For us it is essential that there be no trafficking in weapons, that irresponsible persons not be allowed to cross the border. Israel cannot compromise on matters affecting its security.

[Stabile] But could part of the withdrawal not have been carried out all the same?

[Peres] We cannot have two parties responsible for the same things at the same time. You cannot carry out a semi-withdrawal. Responsibility must be transferred from one side to the other. There are hundreds of important details to be defined: Who will control the police stations, police the streets, collect taxes? There is a 90-page book just on the details.

[Stabile] Will all this, which has not been resolved in two months, be resolved in 10 days?

[Peres] Personally, I am against a postponement. But I believe that when the two major obstacles have been surmounted, everything will proceed more expeditiously, and an agreement will be found. This, partly because there are points, such as the transfer of administrative powers, on which agreement already exists.

[Stabile] So can we say that the withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho will begin in 10 days' time?

[Peres] That I do not know. If we reach an agreement, the withdrawal can take place right away. Otherwise, 10 days will not be enough.

[Stabile] But do you not think that 'Arafat's credibility could be threatened by these delays? What does Israel stand to gain if the moderate sector of Palestinian society becomes weaker and weaker?

[Peres] First, it was not we who made new demands. As for the need to act quickly, at times it was we who urged the Palestinians to reach decisions more quickly. For

instance, I would point out that they came to the working group on economic problems a month late.

[Stabile] But you yourself have said that if the Hamas extremists win the elections in the territories, "the agreement will no longer exist, because our interlocutor will no longer exist."

[Peres] Yes, I confirm that. If Hamas opposes the agreement, that is the only possible consequence, because they want to destroy peace. However, if Hamas espouses the peace agreement, it will be a different Hamas. The same happened with the PLO. As long as it wanted to destroy the Israeli State we did not negotiate with the PLO. But as soon as it changed...

[Stabile] What do you expect from Syria's return to the peace negotiations? Ultimately [President] al-'Asad's tactic seems to have prevailed, in view of the favor found with the Americans.

[Peres] I am pleased that the Syrians have not excluded themselves from the negotiations. I see no major changes, but the fact that they have decided to return to the negotiating table is a good thing and is welcome. We are negotiating on three different fronts. It is nonsense to think that the slowest side is the one that sets the tone. Al-'Asad is lagging 15 years behind [former Egyptian President] al-Sadat. Should Egypt have waited 15-16 years? What has Syria gained by waiting?

[Stabile] The fact remains that Syria seems to influence Jordan's moves, too.

[Peres] I do not think King Husayn would agree with you. The fact is that the Jordanians have done something in the direction of peace—for instance, their involvement in the multilateral negotiations—whereas the Syrians have not. Furthermore, under President Clinton's auspices, we have founded a three-way committee with Jordan on the economy, which is working. No, I do not see that Jordan is moving in the same direction as Syria.

[Stabile] Will the pope visit Israel soon?

[Peres] I can say that for the first time in 1,993 years there are formal understandings between the Vatican and Israel and that accords for the exchange of diplomatic relations will be signed by the end of the year. It is not only a historic, but also a spiritual, accord. In a sense, it is an accord between two religions. I know that the pope has been very excited about the idea of a visit to the Holy Land. There is an open invitation. It is up to him to decide when to come. Our doors are open.

Peres Predicts Treaty With Jordan Imminent

BR1512115993 Milan PANORAMA in Italian 19 Dec 93 pp120-123

[Carlo Rossella report on interview with Israeli Foreign Minister Shi'mon Peres; place and date not given: "Peace Will Be Made on the Road to Damascus"]

[Text] The final draft of Shi'mon Peres' book ("The New Middle East," Henry Holt & Co., New York) lay on the table of a room in a major European hotel. The Israeli foreign minister had just finished proofreading it and had agreed to meet with PANORAMA. Those pages contain all the secrets of the negotiations on the night of 29-30 August 1993 that produced the initial draft agreement with the Palestinians. They express strong feelings, which have filled the history of the great people of Israel and which provided a backdrop to the handshake between Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir and PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat 13 September. What did Shi'mon Peres feel when he, too, shook that hand? He replied softly: "Only the feeling of serving my country."

With truly praiseworthy resolve and determination, Peres, now 70 years old, has been seeking an agreement with the enemy for 20 years. He had secret meetings with the king of Jordan. He mobilized diplomatic forces all round the world. Last, at the beginning of 1993, he started weaving the Norwegian fabric that was to produce the preliminary agreement in August. "Only that night, the last night, did I feel certain that everything would turn out right," he recalled.

Then a difficult and courageous journey began. After the first euphoric moments, the route seemed to be blocked. Now there is shooting going on in Gaza. The negotiations for the implementation of the agreement have slowed down. The PLO is split, and the hawks are curbing 'Arafat's enlightened and generous haste. There is some disenchantment in Israel.

Peres explained: "This attitude stems from the fact that people have not yet seen the results of peace. For the present, it is a piece of paper bound to the good faith and honesty of the signatories. It exists only in intentions, but not in practice. We must learn how to wait." The most disillusioned people are expressing doubts about 'Arafat's good faith, but Peres is not withdrawing the confidence placed in the Palestinian leader. He explained: "I still do not mistrust 'Arafat. The two sides have left their past behind them. They have changed. They live in a different world. There is no longer the USSR supplying weapons and support. Europe no longer supports 'Arafat except to urge him toward peace. The world is looking for peace. Even if perhaps individuals do not change inside, they must nevertheless acknowledge that we have entered a different era. And if the times will not adapt to us, then we must adapt to the times."

Peres' secret is never to be pessimistic but to be realistic, always to look to the future. He tried to describe the benefits of a major economic rebirth of the Middle East and of harmonious coexistence between two peoples that share a history of suffering.

He announced: "A new, golden opportunity was created in the Middle East after the Gulf war. We must succeed in taking it, otherwise we will be punishing ourselves and the people of the region." Peres envisages a common market between the Arab countries and Israel. It is

difficult to point out to him that everything could grind to a halt because the Israelis are finding it difficult to reach agreement with the Palestinians on a start of the withdrawal of their forces from Jericho and Gaza, set for 13 December.

Peres smiled and said: "There is a misunderstanding about the date. The accord states that it will take two months to complete the agreement and four to perfect it. So the withdrawal of the troops from Gaza and Jericho will be completed by the end of April." Peres is confident, and nothing undermines this attitude—not even a reference to the enemies of the agreement. "The Islamic fundamentalist movement, Hamas, is the most dangerous force. Woe betide us if it were to win the elections for the interim Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and Gaza. Hamas is an agent of Iran, and Iran is the main supporter and organizer of terrorism and fundamentalism throughout the Middle East."

But there is also strong opposition to the peace process among the 150,000 Israeli settlers, who have made their homes in the West Bank and Gaza and do not want to move... Questioned about this, Peres lost the aplomb of the foreign minister and adopted the resolute attitude of the political leader absolutely committed to winning the challenge of his life. "In a democratic system," he said, "everyone must be democratic and adapt to the rules of democracy. If I defend the country I must also defend its system. If the land of Israel is the mother, the democratic system is the father." Next Peres stressed that "it will be the Palestinians who will take care of law and order in Gaza and Jericho," the first two cities from which the Israeli forces are due to withdraw. And he expressed the hope that 'Arafat and company will be capable of controlling the situation, despite their adversaries' conspiracies.

Apart from the murderous fanatics of Hamas, there are enemies outside Palestine who oppose peace. Many commentators, in Israel too, say that peace is impossible "without an understanding with the neighboring Arab countries." Peres was quick to counter this insidious theory. He said: "If one set of negotiations is made dependent on another, you will find that you cannot negotiate. If [former Egyptian President] al-Sadat had proceeded from this hypothesis, he would never have signed Camp David. Nor would 'Arafat ever have reached an agreement with us. The cars of the peace train are hitched up one by one."

Peres is sure that Jordan will be the next signatory of a treaty with Israel. "All the conditions now exist. In the coming weeks we will be meeting in Washington," he promised. He added: ""It will be an additional peace, not a separate one. The Middle East is composed of different countries . and each pursues its own policy. This, whether Syria likes it or not."

Peres is clearly irritated by the lack of realism displayed by the Syrians, who are so awkward at the negotiating table, so entrenched in old positions. "Their attitudes are unacceptable," he said. "They talk about a prior Israeli withdrawal from Golan. But before talking about a 'withdrawal,' certain points must be clarified regarding the nature of the peace that the Syrians intend to establish. For instance, you cannot talk about peace without diplomatic relations, without free trade, without open borders. What kind of peace would that be? Then there is a second point—security. It must be mutual. Damascus' positions on this matter are absurd. They want to demilitarize only the Israeli side. Last, they must clarify their position on Lebanon, a country that causes us many problems. Syria does not seem to intend to withdraw from Lebanese politics."

Despite his just observations, Peres said that "Israel wants to negotiate with Syria." He warned: "Damascus has already wasted 15 years, since Camp David. It cannot permit itself to waste another 15. Its military effort is costly. The Syrian economy is in a state of crisis. In the Middle East $50 billion a year is spent on armaments. With peace, a large proportion of this money could be made available to people to improve their living standards. The higher the living standards, the more violence will be contained. Wars and dictatorships are too costly for this era."

These are things which Pope John Paul also says frequently when talking about the Middle East, Israel, and Palestine. Peres confirmed that "in a few weeks' time diplomatic relations will be established with the Vatican." He said: "The pope has been invited to Israel." He supports a conference on peace and security in the Mediterranean, since "the sea is blue and the sky is laden with too many black clouds."

Our conversation ended on the topic of Jerusalem. "It has never been an Arab capital," Peres stressed, "and the Jewish people have never had any other capital than Jerusalem. Everyone can come and pray there, since the city is a kind of joint venture between heaven and earth."

Can 'Arafat, too, visit the al-'Aqsa mosque Fridays to thank Allah once he comes to Palestine? "I repeat: Everyone can pray in Jerusalem," Peres replied. "Even some Libyan pilgrims went there recently." As can be seen from Peres' remarks, Israel's centuries-old capital will always be Jerusalem.

Peres on Deportees, 'Arafat's Mental State

TA1512095393 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by Ya'el Dan and Mikha Friedman, on 15 December—recorded]

[Text] [Friedman] Why is Israel honoring the agreement on today's date for the return of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] deportees since, as is known, there are no longer sacred dates even for our interlocutors in the peace talks?

[Peres] Israel honors every word it utters. I see no reason why to postpone it. If we put it off for a month, we will not be gaining anything. There is also no connection between Hamas and the PLO, quite the contrary.

[Dan] In retrospect, do you think the deportations were justified?

[Peres] My eyes are always looking ahead and not backward. I do not deal with history, I do not provide such evaluations, since I do not see any point in it.

[Friedman] You said there is no connection between the PLO and Hamas, yet MA'ARIV writes today that in order to offset the impression in the territories that opponents of peace are being strengthened by the deportees' return, at the end of the week Israel will release several hundred Fatah prisoners to signal whom we really support. Is that true?

[Peres] We will live and see. We are not a party to Palestinian internal politics. When choosing between Hamas and the PLO, we chose the PLO, not because we prefer one party or organization to the other, but because the PLO is in favor of negotiations for peace and Hamas is opposed. We do not have a common denominator with Hamas. The people who will be returned have learned their lesson, I hope, and will not return to their former hostile activities.

[Dan] Mr. Peres, with your permission, we will move on to other issues. YEDI'OT AHARONOT's front page banner headline today says that public figures in the West have sent Israel messages that 'Arafat is mentally in a bad state, that it affects his moves and his decision-making, and that Israel would endanger itself if it concedes to his demands. Did you personally receive such messages?

[Peres] No, we have not received such a message, and there are differing opinions about 'Arafat's appearance. For instance, his expertise on economic matters is definitely limited, although the economic issue is very serious....

[Friedman, interrupting] Yitzhaq Rabin apparently received the impression during their Cairo meeting [12 December], according to what I heave read, that 'Arafat is not very up to date on the details of the political negotiations being conducted in the various committees.

[Peres] That is the question: Is he not up to date or does he not want to be updated since there is an agreement, and an agreement has to be honored. Negotiations cannot be held on the negotiations, otherwise there will be no end to it. That is also the reason why we are not enthralled by the proposal to introduce another force—the United States, or anybody else—into the picture, because that would mean reopening the negotiations.

[Dan] Mr. Peres, you leave for Paris today. Is there a chance you will be meeting with Yasir 'Arafat, who will also be there? By the way, it would provide you with a chance to determine his mental state for yourself.

[Peres] I do not perform such examinations since I do not have the necessary professional training, and I also do not like to treat others offensively. I am not a physician and I do not examine anybody else's condition.

[Dan] Are you not dealing lightly with an issue that could be important since he is our negotiating partner?

[Peres] No, I do not think so. Look, our archives are full of reports on the health conditions of many Arab leaders, and all that has happened so far is that the archives have been filled up with information, but there has not been any change in the conditions of these people. Therefore, the rumors and speculation are unfounded. We are not carrying out medical examinations of anyone, we are negotiating, and we will negotiate with respect for the people. I think that disrespect, whether for our own people or others, is contemptuous and does not lead anywhere.

U.S. Said Holding Information on Syrian Stands

TA1412184393 Jerusalem New Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Report by political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen]

[Text] Warren Christopher's last visit to Israel seemed to have been unproductive as far as progress in negotiations with Syria was concerned. It now appears, however, that behind the scenes Christopher heard explicit things from al-Asad—more explicit than ever in the past. Al-Asad spoke of full peace with Israel, full peace in return for full withdrawal on the Golan Heights. In addition, al-Asad more than implied his readiness to be flexible on the matter of security arrangements, demilitarization, and the phased nature of withdrawal. Professor Moshe Ma'oz, an expert on Syria, who returned from Washington this week, is also familiar with this information.

[Begin Ma'oz recording] A gradual change could be sensed for some time now, but things are now becoming more definite. I think the Syrians informed Christopher in some way that they are willing to give full peace. [end recording]

Christopher did not communicate this information to his Israeli interlocutors in full. The Americans are apparently keeping it for the Clinton-al-Asad summit in Geneva next month.

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, too, told us yesterday that new voices were emanating from Damascus. Similar, and even more pointed, observations were heard at an extended-forum meeting held at the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] General Staff last week. Senior Israeli sources believe a breakthrough with Syria is no longer a distant goal.

Sources Deny Proposing Truce Deal With Hamas

TA1412191793 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Senior Israeli sources tonight told our Arab affairs correspondent Ehud Ya'ari that they repudiate the reports circulated by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] alleging that it had been offered a deal of a truce in the territories in exchange for the release of prisoners. Hamas leaders in Jordan contended that such an offer had been made in the contacts central Hamas activists had held in Israeli prisons. They said the offer had been categorically rejected.

Our correspondent notes that PLO leaders have been urging Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin to release Hamas prisoners on the grounds that they can persuade the latter to call off acts of violent rejection of the Gaza-Jericho agreement.

Gaza Settlers Move to Permanent Housing Approved

TA1412203693 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] The Pe'at Sade settlement was officially inaugurated in the Qatif Bloc tonight. Our correspondent Nisim Qeynan reports that the settlement had been established several years ago, but for political reasons, its inhabitants had not been permitted to move from mobile homes to permanent houses. Following Knesset Member Shmu'el Avital's intervention, however, the Construction and Housing Ministry recently approved their move to permanent houses.

Arab Killed, 'At Least' 15 Injured in Clashes

TA1412204093 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Disturbances marking the sixth anniversary of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] were staged in several places in the Gaza Strip today. One local resident was killed and at least 15 were wounded in clashes with soldiers. The dead man is 20-year-old Husam al-Bakri from al-Shaykh Radwan in Gaza. This was reported by our correspondent Moti Amir.

[Reporting on Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 1800 GMT on 14 December, Mark Weiss adds that "a soldier was lightly wounded in Jabalyah, and Palestinian sources reported 11 local residents injured in clashes in the Strip."

[Weiss further reports that "the massive high-profile Army presence resulted in a generally quiet day in the West Bank. Two petrol bombs were thrown at the police station in Ramallah. No one was injured. Earlier, a soldier in the town had been lightly wounded when an acid bomb was thrown. The man responsible was later captured."]

U.S. Senate Delegation Concludes Talks, Visit

Army Chief Receives Delegation

JN1412174893 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Staff General 'Abd-al-Hafiz Mar'i al-Ka'abinah, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, received a U.S. Senate delegation headed by Senator Michael Stein at the Armed Forces General Command today.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff reviewed with the guest delegation the overall regional situation, the strategic importance of the region, the humanitarian role being played by the Jordanian Armed Forces to keep peace in various parts of the world, aspects of bilateral cooperation and coordination, as well as issues of common interest.

Prince Hasan Meets 2 U.S. Delegations

JN1412204293 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 14 Dec 93

[From the "News at Ten" program]

[Text] His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the regent, reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to the peace process during meetings with two American delegations.

His royal highness discussed bilateral issues with a Congressional delegation and explained Jordan's position with respect to the blockade imposed on the port city of al-'Aqabah and its impact on the national economy.

A delegation representing the Washington Institute for Near Eastern Affairs also met with the regent at the Royal Court. Discussion at the meeting touched on some of the Middle East issues. Prince Hasan said the Middle East needs the warm kind of peace that enables its people to see and protect its benefits. The regent said 1994 could be the year of peace achievements if all parties were committed to this cause. He also urged a just solution to the issue of occupied Jerusalem, which is sacred to the followers of the three great monotheistic religions.

Delegation Ends Visit, Departs

JN1512110093 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1000 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] A U.S. Congressional delegation has underlined Jordan's political and economic weight in the region.

In a press interview with the Jordanian News Agency before departing Amman, delegation leader Dennis DeConcini said the U.S. is keen to extend political and economic support to the Kingdom, enabling Jordan to bolster the peace process and regional economic development, as well as spreading democracy.

Senator DeConcini described a meeting with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the regent, as very constructive, saying it tackled peace developments and the damage of the Jordanian economy caused by sanctions against Iraq.

Palestinian Affairs Attached to al-Majali's Office

TA1412160293 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 13 Dec 93 p 1

[Text] AL-NAHAR has learned that the Palestinian Affairs Department will be separated from the Jordanian Foreign Ministry and attached to the prime minister's office. The department is to be managed by Minister of State 'Adil Arshid.

Paper Scorns Outcome of 'Arafat-Rabin Meeting

JN1412095193 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 14 Dec 93 pp 1, 21

[Editorial: "The Cairo Meeting: Nothing New!"]

[Text] The Arabs are running so fast toward peace and the Palestinian side is showing so much concern about it. However, this is not enough to change the Israelis from enemies into friends; killers into bearers of olive branches; and racists into doves whose cooing will stop the flow of Palestinian blood from children's bodies, necks, chests, and stone-gripping fists.

Many considered the meeting in Cairo between 'Arafat and Rabin a turning point for the hopes which fill their souls. There were many others who considered this meeting a mere television show, the details of which were drawn by the United States and is now being presented by it. Those who were deluded that Christopher's tour of the region prepared the scene for the success of the Cairo meeting missed the fact that Palestinian, Arab, and international concern about peace is worthless when the other party is a racist entity such as Israel with a leader such as Rabin, who likes nothing better than to see Zionist bullets penetrate the body of a Palestinian. Moreover, Rabin is delighted to take advantage of this international support for peace, leaving us to face our own disappointments and weaknesses as well as an unjustified rush toward a settlement that is still a television show.

The Cairo meeting has ended without a peace smile on Yitzhaq Rabin's face, whose features reflect images of killers throughout history. If we are asked to adopt a stand that reaffirms our concern about real peace, that is, a just peace, then we only ask for moderate optimism, happiness, laughter, and smiles. It is enough for us to note that the Cairo meeting did not change anything in the picture that existed long before 13 September. It is also enough for us to note that the Palestinians are continuing the intifadah with a heroism that is wrenching security from the Israeli's chest, depriving him of his peace of mind, and shackling the occupiers with their own shackles. Despite what is being said about a new starting point for peace in the Middle East, which Christopher talked about a few days ago, which was denied by Rabin in Cairo, and which was not heard of by the children of Palestine and its reverent strugglers, who know that peace is wrenched by blood and not written in ink.

'Arafat Urged To Pick 'Responsible' Advisers

JN1212163093 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 12 Dec 93 p 24

["Orbits" column by 'Arafat Hijazi: "Joranian-Palestinian Relations Come First...Advisers Set Traps"]

[Text] On many occasions, we have suggested to Yasir 'Arafat that rather than counting on the opinion of amateurs on Jordanian-Palestinian affairs, he had better seek the advice of experts who, since 1948, have had firsthand experience in the Jordanian-Palestinian national unity!!!

A Palestinian in Jordan is a Jordanian who has not been discriminated against; Palestinians held ministerial posts and top positions in the military and government bureacracy. Jordanians of Palestinian stock also enjoyed the same right of admission to Jordanian universities. Things continued that way until Jordanian- Palestinian relations began to blow hot and cold and have their ups and downs, in the end inexorably affecting the lives of 2 million Palestinian Jordanians. This need not have happened—certainly not if 'Arafat's aides had foreseen or cared about the potential consequences of their advice!

Last week, King Husayn and Yasir 'Arafat were reported to have agreed to put off the signing of a Jordanian-Palestinian economic agreement upon a request the Palestinian president made during his most recent visit to Amman. On the same day, Israel's Finance Minister Avraham Shohat and Ahmad Quray', director of the PLO's Economic Department, were also said to have pronounced themselves happy with the across the board progress in the bilateral economic talks held in Paris last week.

What are we to make of this????

How can it be acceptable for anyone to see economic talks with Jordan deferred, and, in the meantime, learn that similar talks with Israel are progressing? The question arises as to whether the PLO cares about two million Palestinian Jordanians whose lives are bound to be affected, thanks to the confused minds of advisers who seem to know precious little about the distinctiveness of the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship and the most successful case of Arab unity in the Twentieth Century?

While we are aware of the intense pressure Yasir 'Arafat is coming under to make further concessions to Israel, we would have liked him to set up a committee of advisers comprised of Palestinians who have had firsthand experience of the union with Jordan and who understand how negatively the Palestinian cause and two million Palestinians in Jordan may be influenced by such mortal errors as pursuing an economic pact with Israel and freezing one with Jordan!

If only the advisers who recommend such ill-advised decisions knew that such an agreement with Jordan is a thousand times more important than one with Israel. After all, Jordan will settle for half the loaf of bread available to both the Jordanians and us Palesltinians. Israel, on the other hand, will, not only snatch the whole loaf, but will dispossess us of all our rights and property.

We demand that 'Arafat choose responsible advisers who should understand that relations with Jordan must take precedence over relations with Israel, or any other state, for that matter. This is because a Palestinian in Jordan is a special case with no parallel anyplace else. It has been a miscalculation to put off the economic talks with Jordan. This mistake ought to be corrected; this is because a strong Jordanian economy is a plus for Palestine and the Palestinian cause.

Palestinians at University Protest Pay Delay

JN1512113193 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 15 Dec 93 p 3

["By a JORDAN TIMES Staff Reporter"]

[Text] Amman—Nearly 80 employees of al-Quds Open University Tuesday [14 December] held a two-hour sit-in at the university's offices in Amman to protest a six-month delay in the payment of their salaries.

The protestors said in a note they sent to Palestine President Yasir 'Arafat that they were also deeply concerned for their families, and they demanded to learn about their fate and that of the university.

Representatives of the protesters said that the university, which was established in 1978, was recently sold to Ahmad Tamimi an Arab-American, and the university staff feared that the new owner would convert the university into a private university.

Al-Quds Open University was established in order to provide correspondent education to students in the occupied Arab territories, and its work has been carried out with the help of several offices operating inside the Israeli-held lands.

The workers in these offices have also received no pay for the past six months, and they are worried about their future said the representatives.

"In fact we sent an earlier memorandum to President 'Arafat during his last visit to Amman but he has failed to examine our grievances and to respond to our legitimate demands, hence the sit-in today," said Khalid Hasana'n, head of a committee representing the protestors.

Ahmad abu-Shaykhah, the acting president of the university, has not received his salary for the past six months either, but he declined comment on the situation.

According to university sources, the salary delay affects nearly 10,000 workers affiliated to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) offices operating in Jordan.

Buwayz Interviewed on Peace, U.S. Relations

NC1412220393 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Report by NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondents 'Abdallah 'Abbud and Antoine 'Awn from London]

[Excerpts] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz said Lebanon will sign a peace agreement after Palestinian, Jordanian, Lebanese, and Syrian rights are restored. These remarks were made in an interview he gave today, 14 December, to MBC television. The interview will be aired on the Face-to-Face program on Thursday 16 December.

Buwayz said the Palestinians will not be settled or naturalized in Lebanon, because the structure, area, and economic and social conditions in Lebanon do not allow it to accept just any number of Palestinians on its soil.

Buwayz, who is visiting the United Kingdom, told the NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY that a just, fair, and true peace is one that ensures full Israeli withdrawal to the internationally recognized borders. He said the peace process considers this in full. What is being discussed now are the methods, timetable, and mechanism for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territory and the restoration of full Lebanese sovereignty on Lebanese soil.

[Begin Buwayz recording] I imagine the peace process considers this in full. The consultations that are taking place and that will take place focus, generally speaking, on the methods, timetable, and mechanism for Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Lebanese territory. The Lebanese aspire to control their future again and to restore their sovereignty and independence to the full among nations. [end recording]

Asked about the side that controls the Lebanese decision in the Arab-Israeli negotiations, Buwayz said: The Palestinian side made a separate deal outside the framework of comprehensive peace. King Husayn has signed no comprehensive peace agreement. He held off pending a unified stance.

The Lebanese decision, Buwayz said, is this: Either there is comprehensive peace involving all the concerned Arabs or nothing. [passage omitted]

On relations with the United States, Buwayz said the opening of the U.S. Consulate in Beirut is a step toward restoring Lebanese-U.S. relations. He pointed out that the Clinton Administration focuses on domestic rather than foreign issues, which is unfortunate for Lebanon. Washington, a major world power, has international responsibilities toward justice and toward implementing resolutions that still grope for its attention. [passage omitted]

U.S. Ambassador 'Secretly' Arrives at Embassy

NC1512123293 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] The Voice of Lebanon has learned that new U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Mark Hambley arrived at the American Embassy in 'Awkar secretly and amid tight security last night. Hambley replaces former Ambassador Ryan Crocker, who has ended his tenure in Lebanon.

Gulf Investors: $230 Million to Beirut Rebuilding

NC1512092993 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] Informed sources at the Saudi American Bank have said that Gulf subscription to the reconstruction of central Beirut amounted to $230 million, representing 35.3 percent of 6.5 million shares worth $550 million. The sources explained that Saudi Arabia subscribed $150 million, Kuwait $50 million, and the United Arab Emirates $30 million.

Israeli Shelling, Resistance Attack Reported

NC1512083293 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0715 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] Our security correspondent in the south reports a series of Israeli shellings overnight. At about midnight, the resistance attacked the al-Qantarah post in the border strip with a number of shells. The Israeli forces stationed on the al-Mayadin hill opposite fired back 25 120-mm artillery shells and other tank rounds. The Israeli forces also targeted Wadi al-Hujayr with a number of shells.

At 0200, the Israeli forces fired about 20 155-mm and 120-mm artillery shells at the forests of Zibqin from their positions in (Rishmin) on the Lebanese-Israeli border. At about 0545, an Israeli gunboat raked the area off the Tyre coast, firing large-caliber machine guns at a number of fishing boats; there have been no reports of casualties.

Resistance Attacks Israeli Posts

NC1512142793 Shanayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic 1230 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] In the south, resistance men carried out a rocket and machine-gun attack on Israeli occupation forces' positions on 'Alman and al-Shumariyah hills at 1330 today. The occupation forces shelled the outskirts of Zawtar al-Sharqiyah and Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, Mazra'at al-Hamra', Frun, and al-Litani River basin. [Israeli] helicopters strafed the area.

Iranian First Vice President Continues Visit

Confers With al-Asad

JN1412202693 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1915 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] At 1300 today, President Hafiz al-Asad received Dr. Hasan Habibi, first vice president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and his delegation, which is comprised of Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati; Industries Minister Mohammad Ne'matzadeh; Khansari, director general of the Iranian Foreign Ministry's Political Affairs Department; and Mahmud Hashemi, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Middle East Department.

The meeting was attended by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam; Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'; Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs; Ahmad al-Hasan, Syria's ambassador in Tehran; and Hasan Akhtari, Iran's ambassador in Damascus.

The president was briefed on the results of the Higher Syrian-Iranian Joint Committee meeting in Damascus. The international and regional situation was reviewed. Talks also dealt with the Middle East peace process and the efforts to promote it in the direction of achieving a just and comprehensive peace.

Holds Meetings With Lebanese Leaders

NC1512094793 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, leader of the Islamic Unification Movement; Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shams-al-Din, chairman of the Higher Islamic Shiite Council; Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir Qabalan, Ja'farite mufti of Lebanon; Shaykh Faysal (Mowlana), leader of the Islamic Group of Lebanon; and Walid Junblatt, leader of the Progressive Socialist Party of Lebanon held separate meetings and talks with Iranian First Vice President Habibi in Damascus yesterday.

During these meetings, Lebanon's religious and political leaders briefed Habibi on the current developments in the region and stressed that the armed struggle against the Zionist regime will continue.

The first vice president also expressed satisfaction at the return of tranquillity in Lebanon and emphasized the need for solidarity among all combatant and Muslim groups in confronting the Zionist regime.

Meets Palestinian Opposition Leaders

NC1512103393 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] Leaders of the 10 Palestinian groups [opposing the PLO-Israeli accord] met and held talks with First Vice President Habibi in Damascus last night. At that meeting, Ahmad Jibril, secretary general of the PFLP-GC [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command]; Nayif Hawatimah, secretary general of the DFLP; and Colonel Abu Musa, secretary general of the Fatah Uprising, briefed Habibi on the latest developments in the region and in the occupied territories.

Ahmad Jibril, secretary general of the PFLP-GC, referred to the pressures and problems that are being inflicted and imposed on Tehran because of the Islamic Republic's stand on the Palestinian problem, saying: We hope to see the Arab countries adopt similar stands [like Iran's].

Habibi thanked the high-ranking Palestinian delegation for their presence and their remarks and stated: The Islamic Republic of Iran always considers the Palestinian problem as its main issue and will strive to resolve it until the regime occupying Jerusalem is annihilated. The first vice president stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue its support for the intifadah, which has further accelerated since the 'Arafat-Tel Aviv accord.

Supports Stand Against 'Zionist Regime'

LD1512085593 Tehran IRNA in English 0814 GMT 15 Dec 93

[Text] Damascus, Dec. 15, IRNA—The visiting Iranian First Vice-President Hasan Habibi voiced Iran's support for the revolutionary and Islamic stand of Syria in its campaign against the Zionist regime.

Speaking in a meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria here Tuesday [14 December], Habibi praised resistance of Syria as the forefront country in the campaign against the usurper regime.

He underlined the need for further cooperation among Islamic countries in the framework of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and called for dynamism of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) in preserving political and economic interests of its members.

Habibi touched on the crimes committed against Bosnian Muslims and expressed concern that the region would turn into another Palestine in Europe. He urged Muslim countries to make their best to achieve rights of the Muslim Bosnian nation.

President al-Asad praised Iran's revolutionary stand towards the issue of Palestine and called for withdrawal of Zionist forces from the occupied territories.

Turning to the Gaza-Jericho accord, signed between the Zionist regime and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in September, he said those who always pretend to be defending the Palestinian aspiration have trampled upon the nation's ideals through such a compromise.

President al-Asad supported Iran's stand towards the NAM and reinforcement of cooperation in the framework of the OIC and said Iran and Syria, with the

cooperation of member countries which share identical views, should make efforts to implement the NAM approvals.

He stressed that the world of Islam should take joint efforts to prevent the continuation of genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Habibi arrived here Monday on a 4-day official visit in the framework of the High Joint Commission. Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and Minister of Industries Mohammad Reza Ne'matzadeh accompany Habibi in his trip.

Rabbi Refutes Israeli Allegations on Conditions

JN1012133793 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 10 Dec 93

[Text] Kuwait—Ibrahim Abu-Hamra, rabbi of the Musawi [Jewish] sect in Syria, has announced that a number of the sect's sons will return to their motherland, Syria, soon.

In an exclusive statement to Kuwaiti AL-WATAN today, Rabbi Abu-Hamra said two Syrian Jewish families returned to Syria from Brooklyn, in the United States, in the past few days.

He emphasized that the two families have started to work normally in Syria.

Rabbi Abu-Hamra said this refutes the Zionist allegations about the condition of the Musawi sect's sons in Syria.

Radio Stresses 'No Compromise' Over Golan

JN1412161493 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1237 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: On 14 December 1981, and in a flagrant defiance of all international principles and charters, Israel announced the imposition of its laws on our kinsfolk in the occupied Syrian Golan, thus bringing contemporary man back to the dark ages and to the worst practices of the law of the jungle—practices that have been an essential reason for many devastating wars among states throughout history.

Savage usurpation by force cannot cancel a peoples' identity, civilization, and culture, nor can it undermine crystal-clear realities. Since the beginning of history, the Golan has always been Syrian territory, and the Golan's sons are indivisible part of our Syrian Arab people. The UN Security Council issued the historic Resolution No. 497 on 18 December 1981 considering this Israeli measure null and void and terming it a flagrant violation of both the Fourth Geneva Convention and the UN resolutions that ban the transformation of the features of the occupied Arab territories as well as any tampering with their cultural and historic structure.

Meanwhile, our kinsfolk in the Golan staged a three-day strike as a warning. This strike soon triggered a valiant uprising for more than five months. Despite the large military presence in the Golan, our kinsfolk confronted the occupation troops, tore apart the Zionist identity cards, hoisted Syrian flags, and engaged in bloody confrontations, killing or wounding many people. The occupation troops could not peddle their Judaization scheme. This is because our kinsfolk have always made the world hear their loud voice, and publicly announced both their Syrian identity and their fateful link to the mother homeland. They have also reaffirmed their absolute rejection of occupation and their readiness to offer dear sacrifices for Syria's glory and for the triumph of its pan-Arab message.

Before and after the U.S. peace initiative, Israel tried to bargain over the Golan. It is natural for Syria to reject such proposals because no country bargains over its land, kinsfolk, sons, history, and civilization. Thus, how can Syria do so, knowing that it has carried the message of Arabism and sacrificed the souls of its sons and their pure and righteous blood for every threatened Arab land? Syria has also offered dear sacrifices for the Arab character of Palestine and Lebanon, and regarded Jerusalem and southern Lebanon with the same status as the Golan. In 1973, Syria engaged in the greatest war in contemporary history, and its sons shed rivers of blood to liberate the Golan from the usurping occupier. Hence, how can Syria relinquish even an iota of its sacred national soil?

Syria has always announced that the Golan will never be bargained over or sold out, and that it will never relinquish an iota of Golan's soil. Syria also announced that occupation, no matter how long it may last, cannot change the facts of history, geography, civilization, and culture, nor can it undermine the sacred organic relationship between the parts of the one homeland and among the sons of the one homeland.

It is absolutely out of the question for Syria to ask Israel to recognize the Syrian sovereignty over the Golan and to (? enter) negotiations on phased solutions. This is because sovereignty over the Golan has always belonged to Syria. No aggressor, regardless of his might and arrogance, can undermine this sovereignty. The Golan will never be a subject for compromise, nor will there be an alternative to Israel's full withdrawal and to returning the entire Golan to Syria.

While peace in the Middle East is impossible without Syria—as was acknowledged by world leaders—peace will also be impossible without the Golan's full return and without the Golan sons' return home. Israel completely destroyed the town of al-Qunaytirah in retaliation and to issue threats. Al-Qunaytirah, however, returned to the homeland as a living witness to the crimes of occupation and also as a sign of Syrian pride and dignity. There will be no compromise with the occupation regardless of sacrifices.

The Israeli rulers have recently made statements about their readiness for a partial withdrawal from the Golan. Syria has always said that partial withdrawal is rejected, that peace depends on Israel's comprehensive withdrawal, and that there is no room at all for a compromise in the Golan. There can be no peace in the region, and Syria cannot rest, or ease its resolve, until the entire Golan returns to the mother homeland.

The Golan cannot be negotiated or bargained over. It is the homeland's soft spot. Neither today nor tomorrow will Syria pay attention to any Israeli blackmail; Syria did the same in the past. No matter how long it may take, the part must return to the whole. In the final analysis, the Golan will remain—as has been known by the world throughout history—a proud, lofty, and dignified Arab and Syrian territory. The Israeli occupation will inevitably end.

Talks' Progress Depends on Israeli Policy Change

JN1512074093 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 15 Dec 93

[From the press review]

[Text] Commenting on a statement made yesterday by Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres that the Syrians are not realistic, AL-BA'TH says: This statement is part of a misleading propaganda campaign pursued by Israel since the peace process was launched in Madrid on clear foundations resting on UN resolutions and international legitimacy.

AL-BA'TH adds: We can link the statements of Peres, which demand that Syria clarify some points regarding the nature of peace, to Rabin's recent assertion that no deadline to which he commits himself is sacred. This confirms that Israel, which sheds tears about peace, is very distant from it. Israel also fights peace by every available means and keeps asking Arabs to make more concessions.

AL-BA'TH says Rabin's postponement of the withdrawal of his army from Gaza, despite the fact that he signed a written agreement in this regard, confirms Rabin wants to impose his own will, in any manner and at any time he wishes, if others submit to his will and relinquish their rights.

The paper adds that Peres wants Syria to be realistic. This realism, in his book, means accepting the continuation of occupation and concluding a separate agreement, along the same lines as the Oslo agreement, in order to bolster Israeli hegemony and undermine legitimate Arab rights.

AL-BA'TH asserts that Syria will not relent, nor will it bargain over an iota of the homeland's soil or any Arab right. The Golan is just like south Lebanon and the rest of the occupied Arab territories. Syria believes a just and comprehensive peace can only be achieved through full Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories.

TISHRIN says Israel's hard-line approach will not promote the Middle East peace process, especially since Yitzhaq Rabin thinks he can make peace with the Arabs by offering some limited withdrawals from the occupied territories. Rabin also thinks his agreement with 'Arafat is a major breakthrough in the Arab-Israeli conflict, thus permitting the lifting of the Arab boycott of Israel and the establishment of relations with it.

The paper notes what Syria thinks of the Oslo agreement, i.e., that it will not achieve peace and that it is a deliberate circumvention of the Madrid formula. What proves Syria's sound view of the agreement is what the Palestinian people are facing: siege, oppression, and escalation of the intifadah as a reaction to the occupation's criminal practices. Having become a vehicle for Israeli oppression, the agreement is now spurned by the Palestinian masses.

Despite attempts by the Palestinian side to keep the agreement out of this predicament, Israel has completely refused to change its understanding of the agreement. It insisted on keeping its troops in the Gaza Strip and in Jericho and controlling border posts, crossings, strategic centers, and settlements. Yesterday, Rabin discounted the possibility of reaching an understanding with the Palestinian side on the agreement anytime soon.

TISHRIN says: If the Palestinian side had adhered to the constants of a just, honorable solution, as agreed by the Arab delegations to the peace process, it would not have fallen into the trap of the agreement, which has reached a dead end. The dead end made the United States intervene quickly to save the peace process, which had come to a stop.

TISHRIN asserts that advancing the peace process requires a genuine Israeli response to the Madrid conference foundations, the Security Council resolutions, and the land-for-peace principle. Although Syria responded to the efforts of the U.S. Administration and agreed to hold preparatory talks in Washington, holding fruitful discussions depends on a change in Israel's position and its engagement, in word and deed, in the peace process. Advancing the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks depends on Israel's intention to withdraw from the Golan and south Lebanon. Peace and occupation cannot coexist. Without this withdrawal, there is no hope that the peace talks will make any progress.

Importance of al-Asad-al-Hirawi Summit Viewed

JN1312100693 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 13 Dec 93

[From the press review]

[Text] In its editorial, the newspaper TISHRIN focuses on yesterday's summit between Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Ilyas al-Hirawi. The paper says: Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi visited Damascus where he met with President Hafiz al-Asad. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed in detail the results of U.S. Secretary of

State Warren Christopher's talks in Syria. The two presidents also discussed future working steps that were announced within the framework of the peace process as well as bilateral relations. They expressed satisfaction with the development of these relations on the various levels. Moreover, The two sides reached unified conclusions in terms of coordinating their stands toward the peace process.

TISHRIN continues: While Syria welcomes Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi, it reaffirms that Syrian-Lebanese cooperation serves the interests of both countries and is the cornerstone in the relations of brotherhood and friendship between them. He who thinks these relations of cooperation, which are based on strong and firm ties, could become lukewarm or shaken for even a minute is mistaken. Moreover, he who thinks that anyone, whoever he may be, could sidestep the Lebanese role and UN Resolution 425, ignore the importance of and the need to fully implement this resolution, and even circumvent it is very mistaken. Southern Lebanon is occupied Lebanese Arab territory just as the Golan is occupied Syrian Arab territory. It is totally impermissible to ignore this fact. Just as peace cannot be achieved by sidestepping the Syrian role, peace cannot be achieved by sidestepping the Lebanese role. There is no alternative for Syria and Lebanon to a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon. This is because every occupied territory is the essence of the conflict and withdrawal from these territories is the basis for achieving a just and comprehensive peace.

TISHRIN adds: The Madrid formula stipulated that Lebanon is a basic party to the peace process and an important element in the peace march. Within this framework, the implementation of Resolution 425 means, first of all, Lebanon's restoration of its occupied South. This is part of a just and comprehensive solution and forms, along with Resolutions 242 and 338, the essence of the peace process. Through its maneuvering and deceptive methods, Israel is trying to play around with the Madrid formula—which is based on the exchange of land for peace—and refuses to adhere to what was stipulated by the resolutions of international legitimacy, which are the terms of reference for peace. Moreover, Israel exposed itself and gained nothing but disappointment, because since the occupation is indivisible, a solution and withdrawal from the occupied territories is also indivisible.

From this premise, Syria accurately distinguished between a comprehensive peace, based on a full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon, and partial solutions, separate deals, and phased settlements regardless of whether these proposals and projects are wrapped with security and other pretexts through which Israel aims at keeping the occupied territories or at least some of them. It became clear again that Lebanon is standing strong behind its stand, which is based on achieving peace and retrieving its territory, and is determined not to relinquish an inch of southern Lebanon.

Concluding its editorial, TISHRIN says: There is no doubt that lasting and continued Lebanese-Syrian coordination strengthens the Arab stand, which adheres to international legitimacy, the Madrid formula, and full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon. Persistence on the constants of a just and comprehensive peace is the real and required formula to achieve the desired goal of the peace process and the Washington talks. This is what Syria has been firmly stressing through its call for a complete withdrawal, the achievement of a comprehensive peace, implementation of Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, and an end to the Israeli occupation of the Golan and southern Lebanon, first and foremost.

U.S. Awareness of Syria's 'Key Role' Seen

JN1412101893 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 14 Dec 93

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Israel's Maneuvering and Evasion of Peace," AL-BA'TH says: Amid the international efforts being made to advance the peace process and the positive atmosphere created by Christopher's tour of the region—which culminated in a statement about a summit between leader al-Asad and the U.S. President—and the international attention on this tour, Israel is giving further evidence of its policy that rejects peace and its insistence on resorting to maneuvering and deception. Israel seeks to evade any commitment it makes. The Oslo agreement is an example. The paper notes that the agreement was doomed to fail since its birth, because it contradicted the Madrid formula and the objectives of the peace process, and because every item of it requires a new agreement, as President al-Asad put it.

The paper asserts that Israel's policy has so far been seeking to acquire everything. Israel wants the Arabs to give more concessions until it can have a grip on the region.

The paper affirms that a serious return to the foundations of the peace process and commitment to achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region is a regional and international demand. This is meant to reach security and stability and justice.

AL-BA'TH concludes: This return—which has been emphasized by U.S. diplomacy and which Syria has been demanding since it first felt that Israel is maneuvering and avoiding the obligations of peace—is a starting point for the peace process in line with the bases on which it was launched. Any attempt to circumvent these foundations is only a waste of time and effort.

Under the headline "A Decisive Role," TISHRIN says: U.S. Secretary of State Christopher has stressed the importance of Syria's role in achieving a comprehensive settlement and ensuring stability in the region. President Clinton has also repeatedly noted that there can be no

peace in the region without Syria. He translated this emphasis through the invitation addressed by Washington for holding a Syrian-U.S. summit in Geneva. The summit, as Christopher said, will discuss a host of issues related to the peace process, the Middle East, international developments, and bilateral affairs.

The paper notes that the U.S. Administration is very much interested in listening to the views of President Hafiz al-Asad regarding these issues. The U.S. Administration realizes Syria's key role in peacemaking and ensuring stability in the region.

TISHRIN adds: Christopher's tour has resulted in clear U.S. emphasis on adherence to a comprehensive, just settlement on the basis of international resolutions. In return, Israel did its utmost to evade the principles of a just solution and to sabotage the U.S. peace initiative. Among the other results of Christopher's tour is a demand for returning to the Madrid formula, which Israel tried to blow up, and affirming that this formula represents a practical framework to achieve genuine, effective peace in the region.

TISHRIN concludes by asking the international community to coordinate its efforts so as to immune the peace process against Israeli attacks and clear the mines planted by Israel to blow up the foundations of peace. Only then will the road become passable toward achieving a just, comprehensive settlement that ends injustice and aggression and restores usurped rights.

Iran

Commentary on Habibi's Visit to Syria

NC1412181793 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Commentary prepared by the News Commentaries Group]

[Text] Our First Vice President Habibi and Syrian Vice President 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam discussed bilateral relations and the regional and international situation in Damascus. This meeting was one of the bilateral meetings held between the two countries' high-ranking officials every six months. Iranian-Syrian relations have been indestructible and extensive since the victory of the revolution. Because of this goodwill, bilateral relations have now gone beyond official levels and have extended to the people. Trade between the two countries is increasing and annually tens of thousands of Iranians make pilgrimages to the holy shrines in Shahm.

On the regional level, until now strong Iranian-Syrian relations have created a favorable strategic advantage for the Islamic and national forces in Lebanon and have granted a special position to these forces on Lebanon's political scene. Also, the closeness of Iranian-Syrian relations has extended support for the combatant and oppressed Palestinian forces.

Meanwhile, even though the intifadah, which is in its sixth year, is continuing by relying on its own power, this immense jihad-political movement needs regional help to convey its voice of oppression to the world. Iranian-Syrian political coordination on the two countries' opposition to any type of compromise over the historic and national rights of the Palestinian Muslims can thwart the plot by Israel and the West to destroy the Palestinian aspiration.

The so-called Washington peace talks, which are taking place under American supervision between the Zionist regime and Arab countries that share borders with occupied Palestine, is another topic of discussion in the talks between the Iranian and Syrian vice presidents. Iran rejects any type of compromise with the Zionist regime and believes that a solution to the Middle East problem is contingent on cleansing the area of the usurping and illegitimate regime, while Syria has accepted the implementation of UN resolutions that divide Palestine between the Zionist regime and the Palestinians.

In the bilateral talks with the Zionist regime in Washington, Syria is insisting on the implementation of UN resolutions, while the Zionist regime is trying to impose a compromise on Damascus by exploiting U.S. support and the fact that the power balance in the region has been upset. Iran's political support for Syria can strengthen the position of Damascus and help organize Islamic countries to alter the equation in favor of the Muslims and the combatant and oppressed Palestinian people.

$10 Million Reportedly Granted to Hamas

NC1512090593 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 13 Dec 93 p 9

[Text] The Palestinian Hamas movement will receive $10 million in financial aid from Iran starting in January 1994. During a recent visit to Tehran, movement leaders called on Leader of the Revolution Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i to extend financial and military aid to the movement if Iran really wants to foil the Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement. The issue was discussed at a special meeting of the Iranian National Security Council. A decision was made to grant the Hamas movement a quantity of oil stored in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, where Iran stores quantities of its oil in storage tanks and tankers for on spot [preceding two words in English] sale. Iran has previously granted aid to some of the Arab revolutionary parties and organizations in the form of oil from its on spot sale depots.

Besharati Claims Turkey Will Expel MKO Members

NC1412184493 Paris AFP in English 1613 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Tehran, Dec 14 (AFP)—Turkey has promised to expel members of the Iranian rebel group, Mojahedin-e Khalq [MKO], who are accused of waging cross-border attacks, Interior Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati said Tuesday [14 December].

Besharati, quoted by newspapers here, said the murder in Baghdad of a Turkish diplomat by the Iraqi-based Mojahedin would expedite the expulsion of the rebels from Turkey.

Ankara has become "aware of the terrorist nature of the group and has promised to expel them," he told a public meeting. The Mojahedin are the main armed opposition group fighting against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iraq said on Sunday that members of the Mojahedin had been arrested for Saturday's murder of Caglar Yucel, an administrative attache at the Turkish embassy.

The Mojahedin said it shot the diplomat "by mistake" and blamed the mix-up on the Iranian authorities.

Besharati said Iran and Turkey could not by themselves maintain security along their 511-kilometer (300-mile) border and stressed that good relations between them was of special importance.

Turkey has also asked Iran for help to stop cross-border attacks by the rebels of the Marxist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been waging a fierce battle against Ankara for independence.

An Iranian Interior Ministry official, who was in Ankara for security talks earlier this month, said last week that Iran and Turkey had agreed to take joint steps in stemming such raids.

Gholam Hoseyn Bolandeyan said Turkish authorities had informed him of arrests they had made among members of the Mojahedin. Iran also briefed Turkey on cooperation between PKK and the outlawed Iranian Kurdish group, the Democratic Party of Kurdistan.

Commentary on Bhutto's Visit to Turkey

NC1412184293 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 13 Dec 93

[Unattributed commentary: "Prime Minister Bhutto Concludes Her Visit to Turkey"]

[Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto concluded her visit to Turkey on 12 December. She held separate talks with President Suleyman Demirel and Prime Minister Tansu Ciller during her visit. The sides discussed Bosnia-Herzegovina, Azerbaijan, the Middle East, the Cyprus problem, and Kashmir. It has been reported that they agreed to maintain a common stance on regional problems and improve bilateral relations between Turkey and Pakistan.

The officials stressed the importance of improving political and economic relations between the two countries. Regarding the question of regional relations, it seems that Prime Minister Bhutto expects Turkey to support Pakistan on Afghanistan and Kashmir. Considering Turkey's relations with the West, Pakistan's officials are convinced that Ankara is in a position to play an effective role in the two problems.

Prime Minister Bhutto visited Iran before she arrived in Turkey. Considering her visit to the two countries, the improvement of relations among the ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] members had special weight in the talks the Turkish and Pakistani officials held in Ankara. It is common knowledge that the ECO has become a 10-member organization, since the membership of Afghanistan and the republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus in 1992. Consequently, a new potential has been created for regional cooperation. In view of that, the Turkish and Pakistani officials focused attention on the appropriate use of the opportunities in the ECO and the improvement of relations with Azerbaijan and the republics in Central Asia.

Recalling Pakistan's wish to maintain close relations with Azerbaijan and the republics in Central Asia, several observers have said that Islamabad's officials are trying to strengthen Pakistan's links with Central Asia by securing the support of the other ECO members. Pakistan is geographically isolated from many of the other ECO countries. In view of that, it needs to cooperate with the neighboring ECO members. Meanwhile, considering Pakistan's economic problems, Prime Minister Bhutto hopes to improve her country's economic activity in Central Asia through promoting cooperation between Ankara and Islamabad. In fact, Prime Minister Ciller has informed her counterpart that Turkey and Pakistan must cooperate to realize contracting services in Third World countries, particularly those in Central Asia and the Middle East. Furthermore, she said that Turkey will provide the financial resources required for the contracting service in the two regions.

It is a fact that Ankara has various economic problems. However, considering the ECO members' economic potential, populations, and geographic locations, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey can promote their relations and cooperation to convert that organization into a bright and successful regional establishment that can cooperate with the world to enhance peace, stability, and economic relations.

Economic Cooperation Accord Signed With Finland

LD1412182693 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] At the end of the third session of the Iranian-Finnish joint commission for economic cooperation, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Finland signed a memorandum of understanding. In this memorandum, which was signed after the conclusion of talks between Messrs Va'ezi and Sundbaeck, the deputy foreign ministers of Iran and Finland, emphasis was placed on economic cooperation in the fields of agriculture, commerce, and industry.

In an interview with our correspondent, Mr. Va'ezi, the deputy foreign affairs minister in charge of Euro-American affairs, referred to the agreements, saying: On the basis of this memorandum of understanding, the two countries will carry out joint investments in industrial production, transfer of technology, manufacture of machinery, wood industries, dairy production, mines, and production of naval vessels, port cranes, and heavy diesel engines.

He then referred to the stress placed by Iran on increasing the volume of its non-oil exports to Finland. He added: Ways of creating balance in economic relations between the two countries have been discussed in this memorandum of understanding.

Daily Regrets GCC Spending Oil Revenue on Arms

LD1312144493 Tehran IRNA in English 1240 GMT 13 Dec 93

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 13, IRNA—An English daily Monday [13 December] editorialized on oil-rich Persian Gulf Arab states, stressing that those states spent about 20 percent of their annual budgets on development in the past decade, compared to the 40 percent before the 1980-88 Iraq-Iran war.

"Despite the return of peace, (P)GCC [(Persian) Gulf Cooperation Council] states believe they are still threatened given their vast oil wealth and weak military power. Thus they have embarked on major plans to bolster their armies."

With the end of the war, wrote the article, Persian Gulf states could focus more on economic development but security concerns will remain their obsession. "Such concerns have prompted them to increase military spending, at the expense of development", the daily said.

Official Arab figures show that the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council states spent a record dlrs. 45,000 million on defense and security in 1992, mostly in contribution to an allied campaign to evict Iraqi invasion forces from Kuwait, the paper noted.

With oil prices declining such spending created its worst-ever budget deficit, which stood at dlrs. 27,600 million compared with around dlrs. 16,000 million in 1991, said the editorial.

It noted that the proposed energy taxes by the United States and the European Community could also be at the expense of development and aid by (P)GCC states on the grounds it will harm demand for oil and depress their earnings, the paper added.

It concluded by saying that any future security order in the Persian Gulf, which controls 60 percent of the world crude reserves, must include all regional states. "But before this can be achieved, coordinated attempts must be initiated to build trust and confidence among these parties.

Alviri Interviewed on Oil Price Decline

LD1412111293 Tehran IRNA in English 1045 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 14, IRNA—A morning daily here Tuesday [14 December] quoted an advisor to President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani as saying that oil-based economy will work no more as black gold and will gradually lose importance as a precious commodity. Speaking on the issue of oil price, Morteza Alviri told 'TEHRAN TIMES' that strong political diplomacy along with certain pragmatic measures in the economy of oil producing countries could be a "temporary cure" for the ailing condition of once financially well-off states.

"Political gestures could be a better way of boosting oil prices," the daily quoted the advisor who is also secretary of the high council of the free trade zones.

He added that an urgent summit meeting between President Rafsanjani and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia could have a favorable impact on oil price. He stressed that prices could increase if OPEC members cut 500,000 to 600,000 barrels a day from their daily quota, referring to Europe and Japan as the big beneficiaries of the present oil market.

Alviri pointed to the prevailing economic recession, technological advancement and new energy sources as other factors responsible for reduction of oil importance and price. Noting that according to recent reports oil price has fallen below dlrs. 14 a barrel in comparison to dlrs. 20 a year ago, Alviri told TEHRAN TIMES that oil price would not drop below dlrs. 10 a barrel.

If politico-economic measures are taken, the situation may improve, he stressed.

Commentary Expresses Concern Over Oil Prices

LD1312154793 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1100 GMT 13 Dec 93

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] The fall in oil prices continues in the international markets and they have now reached their lowest mark since the Persian Gulf war. Oil agencies report that the North Sea Brent oil which was traded for $19 a barrel last year and $15 last month, is now less than $14.

Economic experts believe that the fall in oil prices in the past few months has been due to the greater supply than demand from the international oil market, but continuation of the price fall in the present winter cold—when naturally prices improve every year—is inexplicable and poses an unknown prospect for next spring's oil market. They also believe that although OPEC members have maintained their quota shares, the non-OPEC producers are supplying oil without considering market demands.

For this reason Qatar's oil minister, who holds OPEC's rotating presidency, traveled to Muscat for talks with his Omani counterpart in order to start some form of consultation with non-OPEC producers on reaching an understanding. It should be pointed out that Oman is a small and independent oil producer but plays an unofficial coordination role between OPEC members and independent oil producers and also supports the notion of oil producers's greater responsibility in stabilizing the trembling oil market.

Oil experts believe that the strengthening of the international market now depends on an oil supply reduction and that OPEC could adopt a policy of effort to reach an understanding with independent producers. This is more true because reduced oil income due to market fluctuations simultaneously affects all oil producers and the common interests of the oil producing countries makes the attainment of an understanding easier.

On the other hand, according to informed oil sources, the true value of the present oil price is less than half of what it was 20 years ago in 1974. The price reduction accompanied by the reduction in the value of oil dollars has significantly brought down the purchasing power of the oil exporting countries. And this is even more distinct in countries which have oil-dependent single commodity economies.

Meanwhile, in our country—which inherited the former regime's defective economic structure basing the development program on the oil income—reducing dependence on these incomes could guarantee the national

development plan against future oil price fluctuations. Economic experts believe that factors which could guard the national economy and the development programs from the reduction in oil income and other fluctuations include: greater recognition of indigenous sources-means-potentials, expansion of agriculture as the axis for economic independence, economizing foreign currency expenditure, creation of various sources of foreign currency income, encouragement of nonoil exports and the export of oil products rather than crude oil.

Increase in Nonoil Exports Noted

LD1312111493 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0730 GMT 13 Dec 93

[Text] Some 3.771 million tonnes of nonoil goods, valued at 167 billion rials have been exported since the beginning of the year [starting March 1993], showing an increase of 80 percent in weight and 35 percent in value.

Iran's custom office announced: The most important goods, in terms of value, exported in the period include handwoven silk and woollen carpets, pistachio nuts, copper, iron, steel, chemical goods, aluminium and copper containers, animal hides and various types of cereals.

Meanwhile the export value of passenger and non-passenger cars, cast iron, building stone, various knitted materials, caviar, leather shoes, cumin, electric goods, fresh fruits and soaps decreased.

Report Details Privatization of Industries

NC1512112393 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1730 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Report published in the 49th edition of ETTEHAD-E KAR, Labor Union, the organ of the Feda'i-ye Iran Organization, Sazman-e Fada'i-ye Iran; date of publication and place of issue not given]

[Text] In relation with the government's new policy on privatizing industry, many of the country's industries—both heavy and light—have been put up for sale or have been sold. Namely:

1. The Esfahan Steel Plant has been put up for sale; rumors indicate that the Japanese want to buy it.

2. Many National Iranian Industries' units have been sold. The National Iranian Industries office in Tabriz has been closed and transferred to Tehran.

3. The Tabriz Tractor-Manufacturing Plant was reportedly bought after the new year [21 March 1993] by three bazaar merchants for 700 million tumans. The new owners of the plant have fired 3,000 workers, leading to protests and, in some cases, to suicides and strikes. Following the dismissals, the plant is working on a three-shift basis.

4. The Khomeyni Hospital in Tabriz, which is affiliated with the Tabriz University, was reportedly bought for 650 million tumans and privatized by several bazaar merchants. The public sector is operating only a small part of the hospital at a very low cost. It is said that there are no specialists or doctors in this public sector, which is being run by interns, and that when a patient in the private ward complains about costs, he is sent to the public ward, where prices are low.

5. The Hotel Tabriz or the former International Hotel, which is one of Iran's first-class hotels and was nationalized after the revolution, has been sold for 800 million tumans to three bazaar merchants.

6. The government has started to reduce or dismiss employees in some offices, most notably in the Telecommunications Department. For example, people without tertiary education are among the first to go and when you ask why, they say in private meetings among department officials that some people were hired when the government's policies were not yet strong and that now conditions have changed and there is no need for these people.

7. Recently, the sale of kidneys in Iran and in the provinces has increased. In relation with this, children are sometimes kidnapped and their kidneys removed and sold. In some cases, children have been killed and in others, a child is kidnapped for a week and released after one of his kidneys has been removed. This has resulted in great insecurity for children, particularly in Tehran, where parents must take their children to and from school.

8. The privatization of schools has been further accelerated, and it is said that 30 percent of night schools were privatized in 1992 and 50 percent this year. There are said to be three types of school in Iran now: government schools, the former free schools with classes of 50-60 students and three shifts; model popular schools, where fees are paid and the quality of education is better than in the government schools; and nonprofit making schools, the former private schools. The annual fee for Alborz High School is 100,000 tumans and only children with an average grade of 18 and above are accepted. This year, the education system in high schools has changed and technical schools have been opened in a bid to train turners, dyers, and so on. No steps have been taken to set up workshops to train these students.

Roundtable Discusses Decline of Student Activity

LD1012174593 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1550 GMT 9 Dec 93

["Political Roundtable" program with Najafqoli Habibi, head of the department of law and political science at the University of Tehran, moderated by unidentified correspondent]

[Excerpts] [Correspondent] All intellectuals agree about the importance of universities and the decisive influence of students in the achievement of the goals of various

countries. In a healthy system the university strata is composed of usually distinct and elite individuals who have reached the stage of higher education on the basis of their personal talents and capabilities. In the past few decades the students have achieved an importance even greater than before because the fast advancement of science and technology has increased the need for individuals with scientific knowledge.

In fact, due to their mastery of the sciences the university strata will gradually take charge of the management of the country. Through the adminstration, guidance, and implementation of the affairs of the society they will either lead the country toward the achievement of predetermined ideals or toward their own personal goals. [passage omitted] Mr. Habibi, as the first question and as an introduction to the debate: How do you see the current political situation at universities?

[Habibi] Since the revolution, our students have been extremely active in various political fields, and we have seen some brilliant and distinguished examples of their activity. Of course, they had a bright record even before the revolution. However, in the past two or three years there has been a decline. Students have maintained their religious beliefs and faith in the revolution and have continued to believe that it is necessary for all social strata, including themselves, to be active on the political scene. However, there has been some decline in student political activity. Following the recent guidance of the esteemed leader [Ayatollah Khamene'i], who expressed dissatisfaction with the student political movements, I hope their movement will become a more serious and speedier process, God willing.

[Correspondent] You have pointed to the decline of political activities at universities during the past several years. What do you think are the causes of this slowing down?

[Habibi] There are many causes. As you know, in every society there are pressure groups which, depending on the type of their activity, may exercise a degree of influence on the process of social movements. Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in our country, student movements and their active presence on the country's social and political scenes have been useful and influential in helping the growth and blooming of the Islamic Revolution. Naturally, they could have been a disadvantage to some social and political trends. For example, in the takeover of the nest of spies [U.S. Embassy] a series of revelations were made about the activities of liberalism. Or in certain sections of the movement, steps were taken to strengthen the policies of the Islamic Revolution toward the serious and firm defense of the oppressed and the values of the Islamic Revolution. Well then, naturally these movements could be a source of displeasure for some. This also applied to activities regarding international and foreign politics. Due to their purity and sincerity, which look only toward ideals and values, the views of the student movement could have caused displeasure to some social and political trends. As a result, a series of psychological pressures—complaints by some and accusations by others—emerged in order to influence events. Such dissidence, complaints, and accusations were made rather seriously and continued in newspapers and various gatherings. Furthermore, another trend started with the idea that in the present conditions of the country, particularly after the war, the country needed specialists and experienced experts. This view, which did not reflect the whole truth for it sought to isolate students from the field of activity and its constructive manifestations, proposed the slogan that instead of an active presence in political scenes, students should get on with their work, leave politics to politicians, and show no sensitivity toward national management and the upkeep of the revolutionary direction. The students were told that revolutionary organs have been established, that everyone is carrying out their duties as they should, and that in such conditions students should get on with their work and studies of becoming specialists. Perhaps on another occasion we could discuss this particular debate. But the totality of these events, some of which even had practical aspects in some national organizations, slowed down students movements. Of course they were not totally stopped because students are the children of the revolution and they remain in the various fields of revolution. But their movement slowed down somewhat in comparison to what it had been previously.

[Correspondent] Another view is that student ideas and activities should be guided; others believe that they should not be, that they should be spontaneous, that those movements must take form from the student's themselves.

[Habibi] Look! In the past student movements were spontaneous, clear, and pure. They entered the arena with the sound nature of their youth and their correct understanding of the interests of the state. That had useful results as well, whether it was the greatest student action after the Islamic Revolution—which was the seizure of the den of spies or the cultural revolution after that—whose effect has been very deep. Those are the things that the students have done so far, besides being a presence in various arenas. Those things have happened through student sincerity.

When student movements are guided from outside, let us see who guides them. There may be a handful who listen to orders from outside out of opportunism or ideology or interest. But a decisive majority consider themselves competent to recognize the interests of the state within the framework of the general principles of the system, the Islamic Revolution, and the constitution. Therefore, that kind of student will not be prepared to act as an obedient serf and await orders. If student movements are to become government sponsored—not just sponsored by the government; any social current or social pressure groups which seek to influence students—our community will definitely lose the benefit of the value of those political student movements. In fact, that is one of the factors of the experience of the past two or three years, which I mentioned briefly and in general terms at the beginning. [passage omitted]